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"Effective Business
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Letters"

PRINCIPLES OF SALESMANSHIP

By
HAROLD WHITEHEAD

Associate Professor of Sales Relations,
College of Business Administration, Boston University;
Author of "The Rexall Course in Salesmanship"

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TO MY FATHER

PREFACE

Men vary greatly in their ability to sell goods. Some are successful because of an inborn aptitude for selling; others succeed through study and practice in the business world. Whatever a man's natural ability may be, it can be developed and made much more effective by the systematic study and application of the principles of salesmanship.

This statement is borne out by the experience of The National Cash Register Company, The Burroughs Adding Machine Company, The Edison Dictating Machine Company, and other big concerns which have solved the difficult problem of marketing an expensive specialty on an international scale. Such firms as these could not possibly sell their goods through the length and breadth of the civilized world if their sales depended solely upon the efforts of men who are naturally salesmen. They have been compelled to take the average man as they find him, train him in the methods of the experienced salesman, and then try him out. This careful preparation enables nine men out of ten to make good where formerly 90 per cent would have failed if left to their own devices. Experience proves that whatever natural ability a man may possess, his value as a sales producer will be incomparably greater if he is trained to use his *analytical* and *reasoning* faculties as well as the natural intuition of the born salesman.

The object of this book is to present an analysis of salesmanship in a series of lessons each of which deals with a distinct phase of the subject. The author trusts that the experienced successful salesman who works largely by intuition will read the book with interest and also with profit; that the younger salesman who analyzes his failures and is always striving to do better will find suggestions that he can profitably

utilize; and that the novice who assimilates and puts into practice the advice given in these pages may thereby save himself many disappointments and set-backs in his chosen calling.

It so happens that the author combines a varied experience as a salesman, with a practical knowledge of the difficulty of teaching salesmanship. While closely allied with the personal equation, salesmanship is also dependent upon the variables of time, circumstance, and the mood of the buyer. Therefore, to reduce its principles to a practical course of study is a task of unusual complexity. The author as Instructor of Salesmanship in the College of Business Administration at Boston University has felt keenly the need of a book which would reduce this complexity of time, mood, knack, and personality to a practical course of study which should prove its value in the school of experience.

The present book is an effort to meet this need. Its aim is to make the study of salesmanship as practical, interesting, and definite as possible. To this end definite means are suggested for the attainment of definite ends. The theory of the subject is advanced with careful consideration of its practical application. "Practice, practice—and yet more practice," may be the formula for success in any art, and the art of the salesman is no exception to this rule. But the more this practice is intelligently directed by theory which appeals to reason and to common sense, the more rapidly will the desired goal of success be attained.

HAROLD WHITEHEAD

Boston, Mass.,

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CONTENTS

Part I—Preparing to Meet the Customer

CHAPTER	PAGE
I THE STUDY AND PRACTICE OF THE ART OF SALESMANSHIP	3
§ 1. Selling Success Means Business Success	
2. The Value of the Salesman's All-Round Training	
3. Universal Need of Salesmanship Qualifications	
4. What You Need as a Salesman	
5. Why Salesmanship Is Necessary	
6. The Function of the Salesman	
7. An Improved Method of Studying Salesmanship	
8. A Practical Course of Study Which Brings Results	
9. The Handicap of Working Without Study and Training	
II MOTIVES BEHIND ALL BUYING	12
§ 10. Motives that Influence Action	
11. The Salesman's Appeal to Motive	
12. Example of Appeal to Different Motives	
13. The Instinctive Basis of Every Sale	
14. The Desire for Gain	
15. The Desire to Excel	
16. The Appeal to Caution	
17. Desire for Knowledge	
18. The Appeal to Imitation	
19. The Appeal to Affection	
20. Love of Praise	
21. The Pleasure of Possession	
22. Appeal to as Many Instincts as Possible	
23. Which Instincts to Appeal to	
III ATTITUDES OF BUYER AND SALESMAN	25
§ 24. The Classification of Buyers	
25. The Wholesale Buyer	

CHAPTER	PAGE
26. The Problem of the Wholesale Buyer	
27. The Attitude of the Wholesale Buyer	
28. Salesman's Attitude Toward Wholesale Buyers	
29. The Buyer's Particular Trade Must be Considered	
30. The Specialty Buyer	
31. Salesman's Attitude Toward Specialty Buyers, Class A	
32. Salesman's Attitude Toward Specialty Buyers, Class B	
33. Summary	
 IV THE PREPARATION OF THE SELLING TALK	33
§ 34. Analysis of the Talking Point	
35. Constructing the Sales Argument for a Wholesale Sale	
36. The Appeal to Profit	
37. Demand	
38. Price	
39. Terms	
40. Service	
41. Reputation	
42. Ingredients	
43. Palatability	
44. Every Proposition Has Its Talking Points	
45. The Talking Points of a Specialty	
46. Analysis of Goods Not Needed for a Retail Sale	
47. Method of Learning Arguments	
48. Advantages of Learning Arguments Verbatim	
49. Summary	
 V THE CUSTOMER'S MENTAL JOURNEY	45
§ 50. The Mental Stages	
51. The Mental Stages in a Retail Sale	
52. Attention	
53. Securing Attention by Mail	
54. Interest	
55. Desire	
56. Action	
57. Why the Customer Vacillates	
58. Summary	

CONTENTS

ix

CHAPTER

PAGE

VI MODES AND METHODS OF AROUSING INTEREST . . . 52

- § 59. The Manner of the Salesman
- 60. Illustrative Methods
- 61. The Enthusiastic Method
- 62. The Simple, Straightforward Method
- 63. The Demonstration Method
- 64. Demonstration of Food
- 65. Demonstration in a Retail Store
- 66. First Impressions of Goods Important
- 67. Carefulness in Displaying
- 68. Connecting Selling Talk with Prospect's Interest
- 69. The Connecting Link May be a Name
- 70. Arousing Interest by Appealing to Curiosity
- 71. Example of an Appeal to Curiosity
- 72. The Flank Approach
- 73. Variations of Flank Approach
- 74. Do Not Make It Easy to Say "No"
- 75. Summary

VII INTERESTING THE RETAIL CUSTOMER . . . 66

- § 76. The Problem of the Retail Salesperson
- 77. The Attitude of the Salesperson Must be Positive
- 78. Methods of Interesting the Shopper
- 79. Selling Something Other Than the Article Asked For
- 80. Superiority Should Not be Claimed Without Proof
- 81. Selling Another Brand Without Substitution
- 82. The Customer Who Is "Just Looking Around"
- 83. Avoid Asking Many Questions
- 84. Avoid Mentioning Prices
- 85. Finding the Price Limit
- 86. Show the Largest Sized Packages
- 87. Avoid Telling Size
- 88. The General Attitude of the Retail Salesperson

VIII VIVIDNESS OF MENTAL IMPRESSIONS . . . 77

- § 89. Sales Argument Must be Clear and Definite
- 90. Details of Argument Must be Logically Arranged

CONTENTS

CHAPTER

PAGE

91. Definiteness of Statement
92. Use of Similes and Metaphors
93. The Construction of Similes and Metaphors
94. Reasoning by Analogy
95. Comparative Statements Strengthened by Analogy
96. The Usefulness of Analogy in Combating Illogical Arguments
97. Suggestions for Strengthening the Sales Argument

IX WINNING THE INTERVIEW 85

- § 98. To Break In Is Often Half the Battle
99. One Definite Rule You Can Always Apply
100. Reasons Why the Buyer Refuses an Interview
101. When to Force an Interview
102. Polite Insistence Always Worth a Trial
103. When to Avoid Mentioning Nature of Business
104. Ask for an Interview with a Definite Person
105. Ask for an Interview as if Expected
106. The Adroit Use of Samples
107. Heroic Methods Sometimes Needed
108. The Nerve of a Book Salesman
109. Sheer Nerve Sometimes Wins Out

X THE GENERALSHIP OF THE PREAPPROACH 97

- § 110. The Value of a Few Definite Facts About the Prospect
111. How the Specialty Salesman Makes a Preapproach
112. Metaphorical Definition of Preapproach
113. Illustrations of the Value of the Preapproach
114. Useful Information for the Retail Salesman
115. Try to Find Out the Customer's Name
116. Ascertain the Quantity of Goods Used
117. Where the Neglect of the Preapproach Proved Fatal
118. The Preapproach Essential Before Estimating
119. Summary to Part I

Part II—In Contact with the Customer

CHAPTER	PAGE
XI THE DELIVERY OF THE SALES TALK AS A WHOLE . . .	107
§ 120. The Complete Sales Talk Must Be Flexible	
121. Disadvantages of Cast-Iron Sales Canvass	
122. The Language and Style of the Sales Talk	
123. How to Make the Sales Talk Convincing	
124. Meeting the Objections of the Buyer	
125. Securing the Customer's Assent to Claims	
126. How to Build Up a Strong Claim Step by Step	
127. The Time for Silence	
128. Put Yourself in the Buyer's Place	
129. Hold the Primary Object in View	
XII THINGS TO REMEMBER IN OPENING THE INTERVIEW . . .	116
§ 130. Make a Good First Impression on the Buyer	
131. Appearance in Selling a Specialty	
132. Insist Upon the Customer's Undivided Attention	
133. How to Patch Up a Broken Interview	
134. Handling the Customer with a Grouch	
135. Never Apologize for Taking Up a Prospect's Time	
136. The Use of a Business Card	
137. When to Shake Hands	
138. The Correct Use of "Sir" and "Madam"	
139. Helping the Customer Who Is Looking Around	
140. How to Handle More Than One Customer	
XIII THINGS TO REMEMBER IN THE BODY OF THE INTERVIEW	125
§ 141. Things that Jolt the Harmony of an Interview	
142. Make the Argument Applicable to Prospect's Needs	
143. Avoid Mentioning Competitors	
144. When Comparisons Are Permissible	
145. Competition May be Mentioned when Expected	
146. When Demonstration Is Essential	

CHAPTER

PAGE

- 147. Let the Customer Handle the Goods
- 148. The Importance of Asking Questions
- 149. Developing Confidence in the Buyer
- 150. The Use of Testimonials
- 151. Where Testimonials Are Most Useful
- 152. When to Use Testimonials
- 153. Following Up the First Visit

XIV DIFFERENT TYPES OF CUSTOMERS AND HOW TO DEAL WITH THEM 138

- § 154. Sizing Up the Buyer
- 155. How Temperament Modifies the Customer's Attitude
- 156. Argument Must be Adapted to Temperament
- 157. Illustration of the Importance of the Different Methods
- 158. Futility of Arbitrary Classification
- 159. The Easy-Going, Good-Natured Type of Buyer
- 160. The Cold, Critical Buyer
- 161. Do Not Teach the Buyer His Own Business
- 162. The Self-Important Type of Buyer
- 163. Other Types of Buyers

XV CHARACTERISTIC RETAIL TYPES 147

- § 164. When the Study of Retail Types Is Useful
- 165. The Nervous, Irritable, Querulous Shopper
- 166. The Handling of the Querulous Shopper
- 167. The Irresolute, Garrulous Shopper
- 168. Summary

XVI OBJECTIONS AND HOW TO ANSWER THEM 153

- § 169. Meeting Objections a Necessary Study
- 170. Never Openly Contradict the Buyer
- 171. The Mental Indecision of the Buyer
- 172. Two Kinds of Objections
- 173. Answering Objections and Excuses
- 174. Meeting Objections as to Quality
- 175. Meeting Objections as to Price
- 176. "We Are Stocked Up to the Limit"

CONTENTS

xiii

CHAPTER

PAGE

- 177. "We Are Well Satisfied with Our Present Connections"
- 178. "No Room for a New Line"
- 179. Meeting the Pessimistic Mood
- 180. Objections on the Score of Taste
- 181. Combating a Positive Statement that Is Erroneous
- 182. The Objection of the Disgruntled Customer

XVII EXCUSES AND HOW TO MEET THEM 166

- § 183. Introductory
- 184. "I Can't Afford It"
- 185. Examples of Meeting the Excuse "I Can't Afford It"
- 186. Offering Easy Terms of Payment
- 187. "I'm Too Busy to Decide Now"
- 188. "Too Busy to Talk with You Now"
- 189. "I'll Have to Think it Over"
- 190. "Suppose You Call Again"
- 191. "Stop In on Your Next Trip and Perhaps We'll Do Business"
- 192. Talk from the Customer's Viewpoint
- 193. Finding a Point of Agreement

XVIII THE DIPLOMACY OF THE CLOSE 176

- § 194. The Difficulty of Landing the Order
- 195. The Psychological Moment to Close
- 196. Closing Merely the Final Decision
- 197. Assume that the Order Will be Given
- 198. Avoid the Negative Question Close
- 199. Positive Assertions Help the Close
- 200. Picture the Customer Using the Goods
- 201. Example of Appealing to the Imagination
- 202. When a First Attempt to Close Fails
- 203. Example of a Change of Tactics
- 204. The Final Closing Argument

XIX THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN CLOSING 187

- § 205. The Importance of Managing the Interview
- 206. Keeping the Prospect on the Track
- 207. How Much to Sell When Closing

CHAPTER		PAGE
	208. When to Sell the Whole Line	
	209. Closing with a Cautious, Doubting Buyer	
	210. The Signing of a Contract	
	211. Rebates and Discounts at the Close	
	212. When Obstacles Arise to Prevent a Sale	
	213. An Example of Resource in Closing	

Part III—The Salesman's Post-Graduate Course

XX	FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THE BUYER	199
	§ 214. Friendship Often an Essential Factor in Making Sales	
	215. The Importance of First Impressions	
	216. Geniality the First Essential	
	217. How Geniality Can Be Revealed	
	218. The Importance of "Service-Plus"	
	219. Examples of Service-Plus	
	220. Reveal Interest in What Others Do	
	221. Look for a Ground of Common Interest	
	222. Topics of the Day a Point of Contact	
	223. The Salesman as a Source of Information	
	224. Friendly Relations in the Retail Field	
	225. Summary	
XXI	THE RETAIL SATISFACTION THAT CREATES GOOD-WILL	209
	§ 226. The Importance of Retail Good-Will	
	227. The Study of the Art of Giving Satisfaction	
	228. Things the Salesperson Must Refrain from Doing	
	229. Positive Things the Salesperson Can Do	
	230. The Salesperson and the Service of the Store	
	231. The Goods Must Give Satisfaction	
	232. The Result of Truthfulness of Statement	
	233. Complaints About Unsatisfactory Goods	
	234. Superficial Study Kills Enthusiasm	
	235. The Clerical Work of the Salesperson	
	236. Acquiring the Habit of Concentration	
	237. All Customers Must be Treated Alike	
	238. Try to Help the Customer	
	239. Be Patient with the Customer	

CONTENTS

XV

CHAPTER	PAGE
XXII THE KNOWLEDGE THAT GIVES BREADTH	221
§ 240. The Growing Importance of the Man Who Knows	
241. Necessity for Knowledge	
242. Know Your House and Its History	
243. Knowledge of Processes of Manufacture	
244. The Expert Knowledge Demanded by a Motor Truck Concern	
245. Schools of Salesmanship for Specialty Selling	
246. Special Knowledge of Goods	
247. The Special Knowledge of the Expert	
248. Knowledge of Competing Goods	
249. Knowledge for the Retail Salesperson	
250. Sources of Information	
251. The Acquirement of Knowledge Is Always Worth While	
252. The Retail Salesman Must Know His Stock	
253. Knowledge Helps to Make Sales Talk Interesting	
254. The Use of Eyes and Ears in Acquiring Knowledge	
255. Summary	
XXIII SELLING AT WHOLESALE ILLUSTRATED	233
§ 256. Introduction	
257. Characters and Setting	
XXIV A SPECIALTY SALE ILLUSTRATED	241
§ 258. Introduction	
259. Characters and Setting	
XXV A RETAIL SALE ILLUSTRATED	250
§ 260. Introduction	
261. Characters and Setting	
Part IV—The Cultivation of Character	
XXVI THE MAKE-UP OF PERSONALITY	259
§ 262. The Salesman's All-Round Development	
263. The Effect of Personality	
264. The Indefinable Thing Termed "Personality"	

CHAPTER	PAGE
265. How Personality Can be Developed	
266. Why the Study of Personality Comes Last	
267. How to Make the Study Practical	
XXVII THE LEAVEN OF ENTHUSIASM	264
§ 268. "Pep and Ginger" the Sparkle of Sales- manship	
269. The Contagious Effect of Enthusiasm	
270. Enthusiasm Breaks Down Opposition	
271. The Effect of Enthusiasm Upon Tempera- ment	
272. Loyalty and Belief in One's House	
273. Example of the Result of Loyalty	
274. Loyalty Must be Revealed in Little Things	
275. How to Develop Enthusiasm	
276. Enthusiasm the Fruit of Confidence and Belief	
277. The Reaction of Industry on Enthusiasm	
XXVIII THE HAPPY HABIT OF INDUSTRY	278
§ 278. Industry the Fly-Wheel of Enthusiasm	
279. The Effect of Industry Upon Temperament	
280. Where Lack of Self-Discipline Proved Fatal	
281. The Importance of the Work Habit in Sales- manship	
282. The Salesman Who Wants Work Can Find It	
283. The Result of Keeping Always At It	
284. Hints for Developing the Habit of Industry	
285. Tackling the Hardest Jobs First	
286. The Importance of Foot Work	
287. The Reaction of Industry Upon Enthusiasm and Courage	
XXIX THE IMPORTANCE OF LITTLE THINGS	280
§ 288. Attention to Appearance Is Always Worth While	
289. The Effect of Outward Appearance Upon Others	
290. Effect of Dress Upon the Salesman Himself	
291. Importance of Appearance When Selling a Specialty	
292. The Handicap of Unconscious Mannerisms	

CONTENTS

xvii

CHAPTER

PAGE

- 293. Crudities of Speech
- 294. Examples of Mannerisms in Speech
- 295. Control of the Voice
- 296. The Control and Eradication of Unconscious Mannerisms

XXX THE COURTESY THAT ATTRACTS AND PLEASES . . . 288

- § 297. A Salesman's Polish and Finish
- 298. The Aspect of Courtesy Termed "Politeness"
- 299. Example of the Effect of Politeness
- 300. The Politeness of the Good Listener
- 301. Courtesy or Consideration for Other People
- 302. Aggressiveness Should be Tempered with Courtesy
- 303. Discourtesy Should Never Be Imitated
- 304. Acquirement of Courteous Manners
- 305. Courtesy Part of the Salesman's Stock in Trade

XXXI THE FIRE OF COURAGE 296

- § 306. Introduction
- 307. The First Aspect of Courage
- 308. The Second Aspect of Courage
- 309. Where Quiet Persistence Made Good
- 310. The Specialty Salesman Must Be Persistent
- 311. The Cause and Control of Fear
- 312. Adequate Preparation the First Essential
- 313. The Importance of the First Sale
- 314. Truth of Statement Gives Courage
- 315. The Effect of Untruth on the Repeat Order
- 316. Aim at Big Game
- 317. The Discipline of Facing Disagreeable Prospects
- 318. The Self-Discipline of Courage Produces Initiative
- 319. Example of Initiative
- 320. The Exercise of Initiative Develops Faculty of Judgment

XXXII TACT THE LUBRICANT OF THE SALES INTERVIEW . . 310

- § 321. Definition of Tact
- 322. Tact Is Revealed in Little Things

CHAPTER		PAGE
	323. The Tactful Salesman Is Never Argumentative	
	324. Tact Essential in Breaking Down Prejudice	
	325. Tact Senses Hopeless Antagonism	
	326. Tact Recognizes the Hopeless Prospect	
	327. Tact in Its Negative Aspect	
	328. Summary of Development of Personality	

Appendix

QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS	318
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PRINCIPLES OF SALESMANSHIP

PART I

PREPARING TO MEET THE CUSTOMER

CHAPTER I

THE STUDY AND PRACTICE OF THE ART OF SALESMANSHIP

§ 1. Selling Success Means Business Success

All-round business ability can be developed in no better way than by a close study of salesmanship. Study your proposition thoroughly before offering it for sale, and the more worth while you find it, the better it will sell. Even if the sale of a particular article entails little more than mere order taking or peddling, that experience will be a valuable one. But if you want to learn your weaknesses and eradicate them, if you wish to find out your crudities and tone them down, and if you mean to develop the best that is in you, select a high-grade proposition that demands real selling ability and then stick to it until you make a success of the selling game. The man who trains and develops himself in this way will be trained for success in most other walks of life.

This is a sweeping statement. "The writer seems to claim a bit too much for salesmanship," you mentally exclaim. Let us analyze the proposition.

§ 2. The Value of the Salesman's All-Round Training

Consider the qualifications that are required for success in salesmanship. A score or more might be listed. We will mention only half a dozen.

1. First of all a salesman must acquire accurate and exhaustive knowledge about his line. No salesman can know too much about what he sells. Whether selling a complicated prod-

uct such as a piece of machinery, a large and varied line of staples, or some kind of raw material, he must study his goods and their uses until he has the knowledge of the expert. The man who in addition to being an expert in any line is also a real salesman has that all-round business ability allied with knowledge of human nature which are needed in every important executive position.

2. He must be able to impart his knowledge to others logically and quickly. To do this he must have the ability to concentrate all his powers and faculties upon a given subject. The man of discursive speech who finds it hard to talk to the point will have difficulty in arresting and holding the attention of others.

3. He must have tact in a high degree. The nature of his calling demands that at times he be aggressive or insistent or pertinacious. When in the presence of an irritable buyer or a buyer whose will is accustomed to dominate, only consummate tact will prevent a clash of opposing forces.

4. He must have the courage to press his offer upon the attention of those who are indifferent or even antagonistic. By his tact, his argument, his determination, he must change their attitude of mind.

5. He must have sufficient imagination to be able to put himself in the other fellow's place and picture the offer from the customer's point of view. Learning to meet all classes of business men on a level of equality and broad human sympathy is a large part of a salesman's training. Without imagination and tact he cannot create that unconscious feeling of sympathy which is essential for success in a competitive field, where the personality of the salesman often plays an important part.

6. He must be industrious and must discipline himself in the habit of industry when all the odds are against him. He works alone. He lacks the incentive of the time clock in office or factory to keep him steadily at the daily grind. Unless he

acquires the self-control and the will power needed to force himself to stick to the daily grind when work runs against the grain, he will never go far as a salesman.

§ 3. Universal Need of Salesmanship Qualifications

All successful enterprises involve salesmanship in one form or another.

When a young man applies for his first position he is a salesman. He tries to sell in the best market his personality plus the knowledge and training he has acquired. When the young doctor, lawyer, preacher, or journalist starts his professional career he begins as a salesman selling his own services. The future retail or wholesale merchant comes to control the selling activities of others after proving himself in the ranks of salesmanship. The manufacturer who fails to solve the problem of distributing and selling his goods (a problem which sometimes is more difficult in its solution than that of production) fails in his enterprise.

Other things being equal, success in all these different walks of life depends primarily upon salesmanship. You may be an expert in your line, you may have a special fund of knowledge, you may be of exceptional intellectual ability; but if you lack any of the essential qualifications of salesmanship you are handicapped. Your success in any career will be likely to be mediocre.

Such being the qualifications you need as a salesman let us now consider what you need to equip yourself for a career that you intend to make into something more than a temporary job.

§ 4. What You Need as a Salesman

Salesmanship is a mental process. You cannot use force upon a buyer. You can neither hypnotize him nor coax him to

buy against his will. Conviction of the advantages of an offer is the basis of every sale. Only after this conviction is established, first in the mind of the salesman and second in the mind of the buyer, will an agreement be reached or the order secured. To convince yourself you must have a thorough knowledge of your goods and the technical facts of the business, supported by confidence in the value of your offer, whether this relates to goods or to service.

To carry conviction to the mind of the buyer you need to be equipped with arguments in favor of the offer and with arguments for profiting from the offer *now*; and these arguments must be sufficiently varied to appeal to every type of mind. You also need to have at your command an apt answer to numberless objections, any of which may be advanced as a reason for not buying, even though only remotely if at all connected with the goods or offer.

Finally, to carry this conviction to the buyer's mind with the least effort and the maximum success in the largest possible number of cases, you must have personality. This is an all-inclusive term which comprises manner, appearance, address, tact, argumentative skill, and the force and strength of your character as a whole. Your personality must be such that it dominates where leadership is needed or reduces to calm reasonableness where irritation and prejudice are present or gives backbone where hesitation and procrastination are revealed. Your manner and method as a capable salesman must be such as insensibly attract almost every type of buyer and in no case irritate or offend.

Thus, besides having an exhaustive knowledge of your goods which is based on careful analysis, you need to be a keen student of human nature and to have the introspective faculty of dissecting and analyzing yourself. Unless you develop in this threefold way you cannot make the most of any natural ability you may possess.

§ 5. Why Salesmanship Is Necessary

Salesmanship may be defined as the art of presenting the advantages of an offer in a way which arouses the desire to profit by it and leads to prompt action.

If all goods were standardized and if they were made only in quantity to fill an existing demand, there would be little or no need for salesmanship. But commodities are frequently produced in greater quantity than is needed to fill the existing demand. Moreover they vary in price and utility. It becomes necessary to explain the reasons for these variations or to make clear the utility of a new product. In this way the existing demand is filled by the best goods that are made for the purpose or a demand is created for new goods.

When typewriters were first introduced the customer had to be shown the many advantages of using such a machine. He had to be taught how they save time, energy, and money. This aroused the desire to profit from their use and so a demand for typewriters has been created. When naphtha soap was first sold the housewife had to be taught that the soap will wash clothes in cold water with very little rubbing. The utility of the new product had to be shown and proved. The same is true of every article termed a specialty, with a name and identity of its own, as distinguished from an article termed a staple, the identity of which is lost in the bulk. If a new product suitable, say, for the repairing of shoes, were placed on the market, it would be given a special name, salesmanship would be called in to make clear the advantages of this specialty over leather, and thus a demand would be created.

§ 6. The Function of the Salesman

To fill an existing demand with the best goods produced for the purpose or to create a new demand for new products is the function of the salesman.

The salesman is a commercial messenger who acts as a link

between various organizations concerned in the distribution of goods. As the representative of the manufacturer he may visit the wholesaler. As the representative of the wholesaler he may visit the retailer. Or he may carry on his duties behind the counter of a store. Wherever employed his function is to serve as a medium of communication between producer, dealer, and consumer.

§ 7. An Improved Method of Studying Salesmanship

The study of salesmanship has often been presented under three heads—the goods, the customer, and the salesman himself. This arrangement has heretofore been adhered to in nearly every work on salesmanship that aims to be more than a collection of homilies on the subject. An analysis of some kind is needed in order to reduce a subject complicated with so many variables into a practical course of instruction. And the above analysis seems at first view a good working arrangement.

In practice, however, this method of treating the subject presents serious difficulties. For one thing it is impossible arbitrarily to differentiate the study of the goods and the construction of the sales talk from the type of customer to whom the goods will be sold, since the appeal will depend as much upon the buyer's motive for making the purchase as upon the description of the goods themselves. In some forms of salesmanship a description of the goods and their merits is of comparatively small importance as compared with the ability to depict the advantages of an offer when viewed from other aspects.

Then again the development of your personality cannot be considered as a thing apart from your every-day work of selling. It is of little use to suggest to you that you should cultivate certain essential qualities such as courage, tact, pertinacity, courtesy, and what-not unless a course of instruction.

can be mapped out which will dovetail into your daily work and will help you to acquire any essential trait in which you may feel yourself to be deficient.

§ 8. A Practical Course of Study Which Brings Results

The present work reduces the study of salesmanship to a more definite course of procedure than is possible under the arbitrary arrangement previously mentioned. In this volume the subject is divided into four heads. Under the first heading "Preparing to Meet the Customer" all the advice which can be practically applied when constructing the sales argument is treated in a few comprehensive chapters, each chapter representing a particular phase of the subject. This portion of instruction you can put into practical operation at your desk before you go out to meet your customers. Thus many of the precepts which you are constantly enjoined to bear in mind and which because of their number and sometimes contradictory nature often perplex the budding salesman will have become familiar, so that they may be taken for granted when the time comes to face your customer.

The second part of the course of study deals with certain details of your attitude and bearing toward the customer or with your method of delivering the sales talk. They are things which you must put in practice when in contact with the prospect but many of them can be rehearsed beforehand. To the extent that the rehearsal is conscientiously practiced they will more readily recur to mind and be more automatically utilized during the ordeal of facing a customer.

After constructing the sales talk and acquiring a certain amount of experience in its delivery you are ready for a post-graduate course. This takes up minor details with which the memory need not be burdened while acquiring the rudiments of the art and which can be more advantageously studied after you have plunged into the game.

The final part of your training, relating to personality, is taken up as the last aspect of the course of study. Only after a certain amount of actual selling experience will you realize wherein lie your weaknesses and how best to strengthen them. This phase of your training is extremely important yet it is a difficult one to reduce to a definite course of study. Usually the subject is treated in a series of interesting essays which while they contain much sound advice are often difficult to apply in the practical school of experience. In this work an attempt has been made to show the relationship of the development of certain essential traits to the work in hand, and to offer suggestions as to how you can acquire these attributes or strengthen them where they are weak through their practical application to your daily problems.

§ 9. The Handicap of Working Without Study and Training

With this preamble the bow before the curtain can now be completed. It is profitless to waste time in considering whether salesmanship has yet attained the dignity of a science or whether you as a salesman must be born and not made. To talk of the science of salesmanship is as nonsensical as to talk of the science of acting or the science of debating. The student should remember rather that salesmanship is an *art*. Like the forensic art of the advocate at the bar or the histrionic art of the actor on the stage it demands careful preparation if the first attempts are to be anything but the bungling and crude efforts of the untrained amateur.

Some men are born advocates; others are born actors. Yet the fact remains that they can both profit immensely by a course of training in their respective callings. A man who lacks a natural gift for pleading or for acting may yet by careful training and persistent effort develop no mean ability in either direction.

Exactly the same rule applies to you as a salesman.

The advocate and the actor must put the theoretical side of their study to practical test in their respective callings. So must the salesman. Men everywhere have to be developed in the school of experience. But the salesman who for this reason elects to learn only in that hardest of all schools, is as ill-equipped for his job as the actor who braves a public ordeal with a half-memorized part and without any clear notion of what he is going to do or say.

CHAPTER II

MOTIVES BEHIND ALL BUYING

§ 10. Motives that Influence Action

Behind every human action there is a motive. We all have a reason for buying—even the woman who is “just shopping.” Some of these motives are instinctive and elemental—the aforementioned woman “just loves shopping”—others are the fruit of careful reflection and reasoning. The study of salesmanship begins with an analysis of the various motives which may prompt or produce the desire to buy in one case and may lead to a refusal in another.

Behind every purchase there are two conflicting motives: an instinctive desire to possess the article proffered if it gives pleasure, renders a profit, or serves some useful purpose; and an instinctive reluctance to make the purchase because it involves drawing upon our reservoir of power, symbolized in money. The more limited this reservoir of power the more cautious we are in drawing upon it. If by nature we are extremely cautious then we “just hate spending.” If we have the means to spend and refuse to do so we may be dubbed “tightwads” or be described as “stingy” or “mean.”

Money is the token we exchange for necessities, comforts, luxury, leisure, and the labor and service of others. The art of the salesman is to convince the buyer by means of graphic description or reasoned argument or both, that the offer returns full value in comfort, luxury, or utility for the expenditure involved. He creates in the mind of the buyer a strong and vivid mental picture of the benefit to be derived from the

purchase so as to overcome that instinctive reluctance to draw on his reservoir of power which all experience when faced with a purchase of any moment.

Thus the motive behind every purchase is the satisfaction of one or more instinctive desires. A merchant buys goods for resale to satisfy the money-making instinct; an automobile is bought because it gives pleasure by satisfying the instinctive desire for luxury and comfort, or because it appeals to the pride of possession, or perhaps because both instincts enter into the transaction.

§ 11. The Salesman's Appeal to Motive

The aim of the salesman is to present not only the advantages or attractiveness of his goods in a convincing manner but to arouse in the mind of the buyer as many motives as possible for making the purchase. If a particular motive seems stronger in its appeal than any other he will, of course, lay increased stress upon that.

From the many arguments in favor of his goods, which shall the salesman select? If he is selling an automobile, shall he base his appeal on the fact that the prospect will derive great pleasure from motoring? Or shall he lay stress on the fact that the car is economical to operate or that by its use the prospect will be able to conserve his time?

Or presume that the commodity in question is a suite of expensive mahogany office furniture. Will it be well to emphasize the pride to be derived from its possession, or will it be preferable to argue that the elaborate furniture will reflect its owner's prosperity and sound business standing to his customers and consequently pay for itself in the profits derived from prestige? The salesman must consider these questions in the preparation of his various sales arguments no less than he must analyze his proposition so as to make clear its advantages from every viewpoint.

§ 12. Example of Appeal to Different Motives

A salesman trying to sell an automobile to a young married man interested him to the extent of making an appointment for a trial trip in a car similar to the one under consideration. During the ride the customer asked several questions as to the reliability of the car, the chance of its getting out of order, and the cost of its upkeep. The salesman based his argument especially on an appeal to caution by explaining in how many ways every component part of the car was tested before the complete machine was assembled and sent out on the road, and how easily and inexpensively repairs and replacements could be made should these prove necessary. The prospect seemed to be almost sold.

A few days later the salesman heard that the young man had practically decided to buy a competing car. This car while fully equal to his own in mechanical perfection was inferior to it in the beauty of its design and the style of its finish.

Instead of interviewing the prospect at his place of business, the salesman called upon him during the evening at his home and interviewed him in the presence of his wife. Drawing her into the conversation he appealed to her motive of pride by accentuating the stylish appearance of his car as compared with that of his competitor. He gave also the names of two recent purchasers in the town whose wives were prominent figures in the social life of the community. His change of appeal from mechanical perfection as a means of satisfying the instinct of caution to appearance as a means of satisfying the motive of pride proved effective in closing the sale.

§ 13. The Instinctive Basis of Every Sale

An article may possess obvious advantages or points of superiority over competing goods; but a sale does not neces-

sarily follow when these are drawn to the attention of the buyer. An appeal must frequently be made to the instinctive motives which influence the buyer and which have nothing to do with a description of the goods, before the final decision to buy is reached. These instincts are inherent in human nature and give rise to desires. We naturally desire things that give pleasure or safeguard from danger, things that add to our wealth or satisfy our pride; we like to emulate people whom we respect and admire; we naturally want to please those whom we love.

These instinctive motives which are as complex as human nature itself vary with the kind of goods bought, the character of the buyer, and the conditions under which the buyer and seller meet. For the purpose of salesmanship they must be analyzed and reduced to a working basis. In such an analysis as this it will suffice to consider the few leading motives; upon one or more of these the sales argument can always be based. The merits of the goods are rarely sufficient in themselves to rouse the buying motive and the argument is strengthened in proportion as it appeals to any of these instincts.

§ 14. The Desire for Gain

The strongest of all buying motives is the desire for gain. We are willing to spend money in order to make money. Therefore this is the most dominant of all commercial instincts and its satisfaction is the main motive which actuates business.

Offering goods for resale is one of the most important branches of salesmanship. When such a sale is made it is advisable to show what will be gained thereby. The gain may be direct, as in the case of the merchant buying merchandise to be sold at an advanced price; or it may be indirect, as when a merchant is induced to invest money for advertising purposes. The strongest form of this appeal is present

when goods are offered at a reduced price. The bargain has an attraction all its own and will often secure attention when everything else has failed.

Whenever a sale is made for business as distinguished from personal use, the appeal to the desire for gain comes first in importance and is the primary motive on which the argument should be based.

§ 15. The Desire to Excel

A natural and legitimate pride in achievement arouses in all the desire to excel. In those of strong character it reveals itself as ambition; in weaker mortals it degenerates into vanity. The appeal to vanity is considered under §20, "Love of Praise." Ambition prompts us in the struggle to amass wealth, to win promotion, to gain power, to acquire learning. This instinct may reveal itself in any of a hundred different ways. However revealed it is a motive to which an appeal can be made either directly or indirectly in the construction of almost every sales argument.

A rare painting valued at \$100,000 came for sale to the gallery of a famous art dealer whose judgment was as reliable as his word. He promptly invited a wealthy patron who was at that time forming a collection, to inspect the painting. The picture did not at all appeal to the customer and no emphasis on beauty of line, tone, or color aroused interest. The assurance of the dealer that the painting was well worth the price asked proved of no avail and the sale seemed lost until the dealer told his client something of the history of the artist. He dwelt upon the latter's high reputation and proved that other works by him were housed in the illustrious homes of European nobility.

The appeal to artistic excellence and to confidence in the dealer's judgment failed; the appeal to the prestige of possession and the desire to excel resulted in a sale.

A salesman offering an educational course aroused sufficient interest in the subject of education to gain the ear of his prospect but the young man's interest proved lukewarm and passive. The problem was to turn this apathetic interest in knowledge into an active desire to obtain it by an appeal to latent ambition.

The salesman knew that one or two friends of the young man were studying business courses in order to prepare themselves for bigger things. He therefore pictured the results of their efforts and contrasted their influence and progress in the future with the probable mediocrity of his unambitious listener. The appeal to the desire to excel was strong enough to effect a sale.

§ 16. The Appeal to Caution

Caution is the primary motive to which an appeal should be made in the sale of anything which guards against loss, injury, or danger. Caution is the main spring in the purchase of all forms of insurance. The father of a family wishes to protect his wife and children against want in the event of his death; the owner of a house takes out insurance to protect himself against loss by fire; the business man buys bonds in prosperous times to provide against financial difficulties in hard times. The desire for safety may in some cases be a stronger motive of appeal than the desire for gain. A cautious business man seeking an investment would be inclined to buy government bonds or investments yielding a low rate of return which would assure him of the security of his money.

This instinct may sometimes be effectively appealed to with goods which are not intended directly to satisfy it. To illustrate, a salesman called at a dry-goods store and offered an exclusive agency for a certain brand of hosiery. The buyer recognized the merits of the line and the desirability

of the agency, but his caution made him procrastinate. To the stereotyped answer: "I don't want to do anything about it now, but I may a little later," the salesman replied:

"We shall be very glad to have you handle our agency a little later, Mr. Jones, if it is still open. In the meantime you can have no objection to my offering the proposition to the People's Store."

The suggestion that an opportunity of securing a possible and highly probable advantage over him might be offered to the merchant's competitor, sufficed to close the sale.

In another instance a business man about to take a trip across the continent was approached by a representative of one of the transcontinental railroads. There seemed no particular reason why the business man should travel over the agent's road. In conversation the agent learned that the prospective passenger always carried accident insurance when traveling. This indicated that the instinct of caution was strongly developed. The agent therefore laid great stress on the fact that his road had not met with a serious passenger train accident for years. This information sufficed to secure an order for tickets.

For one business man who is willing to take chances and throw caution to the winds there are a dozen who prefer the safe course. Every selling argument should include when possible an appeal to the innate cautiousness of human nature.

§ 17. Desire for Knowledge

All civilized progress is due to the desire for knowledge. Lacking this instinct knowledge would have been gained solely by experience and nothing would have been developed by scientific experiment and study based on knowledge formerly acquired and preserved. To this instinct we owe printing and the widespread sale of books. It prompts us in the acquisition of miscellaneous information for its own sake apart

from any use to which the information may be put. In its crude and undeveloped form the instinctive desire for knowledge reveals itself as curiosity.

As illustrations of the potency of the appeal to this instinct in suitable cases, consider the methods of the salesman selling educational works such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, travelogues, works of history, and so on. He bases his argument on the supposition that his prospective customers are thirsting for the information contained in his books. When he has first aroused their curiosity, he proves to their satisfaction that this thirst will be completely assuaged by quoting interesting extracts from the work, choosing those which tend to rouse the desire for further knowledge.

Frequently the appeal to curiosity is of value in gaining an interview and in arousing the interest of an indifferent buyer. Many salesmen refuse to reveal their identity or the nature of their business at the start. The interview is opened with a suggestion carefully designed to awaken a desire for more information about the subject. This method will be considered more in detail in later chapters.

§ 18. The Appeal to Imitation

We often do things because others do them. We are naturally imitative from birth. The child first learns to speak in this way. This inherent tendency to imitate others explains the vogue of fashion and style. This instinct can be readily appealed to in the phrasing of the sales arguments.

The wealthy art patron already mentioned was finally induced to buy the rare painting by the instinctive desire to excel; but imitation—wanting to do what others whom he admired or envied were doing—primarily led to the formation of an art collection and thus to the purchase in question.

One man buys a home in a particular place because several of his friends have done so. He likes to live among his

acquaintances. A cautious person decides on the purchase of a particular kind of automobile because he knows that many others have bought it. This inspires confidence in the merits of the machine. Here caution and the desire to follow the lead of others are equally blended. A perfume named after a popular singer may find a ready sale because it is presumed that the singer uses the scent and an appeal is thus made to the imitative instinct. The salesman who is seeking to advertise his goods in a dealer's window frequently obtains free window displays by appealing to this motive. If all arguments in favor of putting in the display fail to win permission, then as a final resource the dealer is shown photographs of other prominent stores which have made profitable use of the displays.

The majority of women imitate the mode of living or dress or the actions of those in a slightly higher social sphere. The retail salesman frequently finds it advantageous to remember this in his appeal. If he is selling an article of wear or for toilet use, for example, he mentions when possible the fact that Mrs. Blank, the wife of the bank president, or some other local celebrity uses the same thing.

A customer in a hardware store was hesitating between the purchase of a two-dollar and a three-dollar saw. The salesman thereupon remarked that Mr. Wilkins had been in yesterday and bought one of the three-dollar tools. Mr. Wilkins was well known to the customer who probably relied upon his friend's judgment. The more expensive article was promptly bought.

The appeal to imitation can be most effectively made either at the opening of an interview or at its close when the buyer reveals indecision. To mention the name of a customer who has just bought and who is known to the prospective purchaser is as a rule an effective means of winning the ear of an indifferent or reluctant prospect. Similar tactics at the

close of the argument will frequently transform an undecided prospect into a satisfied purchaser.

§ 19. The Appeal to Affection

An appeal to the emotions forms as a rule no part of a business interview. In consequence the above form of appeal has a comparatively limited scope. In the sale of certain articles, however, the affections cannot be ignored as a means of strengthening the argument. The prompting of this instinct induces the purchase of something for those we love. An obvious example is a mother, who when passing through a store is easily tempted to take home an article of finery or a toy for her child if an aptly phrased show card suggests the purchase by an appeal to affection.

An effective appeal can be made to this instinct in another way. The influence of a friend, a wife, or a mother, is oftentimes so strong that it dominates the actions of those they love. Where the salesman can add such an influence in favor of his offer to his other arguments, his appeal will be proportionately strengthened.

When any representative of a well-known correspondence school visits the home of a prospect he tries to arrange for the wife or parent to be present at the interview. His selling problem is to arouse the ambition of the purchaser to the point of sacrificing the time and money needed to buy and study a correspondence course of instruction. The advice and urging of a wife or parent often impel the prospect to enroll when the arguments of the salesman have failed. Here the motive may be more or less mixed and love of praise and ambition be as determining factors as the appeal to affection. Many people are impelled to a course of action if it is expected to result in some benefit to those they love, though they remain obdurate if the benefit to be derived is for themselves alone.

§ 20. Love of Praise

The love of praise is inherent in human nature. In its natural form it is revealed as ambition and desire to excel. In its exaggerated form it degenerates into vanity and boastfulness. The powerful appeal of extreme fashion is based on vanity.

A business man about to refurnish his office had decided to buy a plain, inexpensive oak suite. This would have served his purpose admirably; but when the salesman vividly pictured the splendor of a handsome set of mahogany furniture and how such a suite would be admired by his friends and customers the business man was willing to pay double the price he had mentally allotted to the equipment.

Many a customer buys a more expensive automobile than he at first contemplates when the salesman pictures the impression such a car will make upon his friends. The encyclopedia salesman appeals to this instinct when he points out the pride of possession and the gratification afforded by the appearance of such a handsome and literary set of books in the home bookcase.

§ 21. The Pleasure of Possession

It is obvious that the more vividly the salesman can picture the pleasure to be derived from the possession of anything, the stronger the selling argument becomes. This pleasure may range from the quiet satisfaction of possessing such a thing as an enduring and perfect tool to the youthful ecstasy of owning an elaborate and much longed for toy. The pleasure of possession can be most frequently appealed to when selling to the final consumer and is a form of sales argument most readily applicable to selling in a retail store. The appeal to this instinct is considered in greater detail in other chapters dealing with retail salesmanship.

§ 22. Appeal to as Many Instincts as Possible

The fact that a strong appeal may be made to what on the surface seems the most powerful of all buying inducements does not necessarily mean that if this argument fails the sale cannot be made. A merchant may be convinced that an article offered will return a handsome profit and be well worth handling. But if he is already overstocked or if he is short of capital he may reject the offer for the time being and concentrate his efforts on the disposal of the goods on hand. In such a case the salesman can pave the way for a future sale.

An automobile salesman may have pictured the pleasure to be derived from the possession of a motor car, he may have convinced the prospect that his machine is as mechanically perfect as such a piece of mechanism can be, and that the cost of maintenance and operation is reduced to the lowest possible limit; but the appeal to pleasure, caution, and economy may fail if for reasons best known to himself the prospective purchaser has decided to deny himself the gratification of owning an automobile. In such a case the enterprising salesman seeks other arguments and modes of appeal in order to break down opposition. Success frequently depends upon resource in making use of other buying motives when the obvious arguments have failed.

The resourceful automobile salesman already mentioned had vainly tried to sell a luxurious high-powered car to a wealthy customer who two or three years before had bought a comparatively inexpensive runabout. The prospect acknowledged that the high-powered car was all that was claimed, yet he remained obdurate despite the salesman's varied and eloquent arguments.

After half a dozen fruitless interviews the salesman determined to appeal to an instinct which he had so far neglected. He fitted the car in question with an old set of tires and

drove it to the home of the prospect while the latter was away on business. He then invited the two daughters of the house to take a trial trip in the car, explaining that if they would add their influence to his sales argument their father would probably purchase it. A trial ride followed by an evening's filial coaxing brought a prompt purchase.

Here the salesman based his final appeal on affection. This proved effective after everything else had failed.

§ 23. Which Instincts to Appeal to

The aim of the salesman is obviously to base his appeal on those instincts which are presumed to exert the strongest influence over the prospective buyer. In selling to a retail merchant it is apparent that his principal motive for buying is the satisfaction of the desire for profit. In selling an automobile to a person who does not yet own one but who can well afford the price, the dominating instinct will be pleasure. In selling a new car to somebody who already owns one the chief motive of appeal may be pride. But, as has been shown, the motive which most influences the sale may not always be the apparent one. In selling life insurance the satisfaction of caution and affection would seem to be the principal form of appeal; yet with some people a stronger motive may be a desire for gain. The fact that immediately on taking out a \$5,000 policy they have added \$5,000 to their estate may appeal to their instinct for saving.

In the construction of his various sales arguments (see Chapter IV) the salesman should aim to present his offer in a variety of ways so as to appeal to as many motives as possible. Then in the presence of a prospect he can readily ascertain the most potent buying motive by feeling his ground; or the appeal may be made to several motives in an endeavor to ascertain the dominant one, thus making the combined appeal strong enough to effect the sale.

CHAPTER III

ATTITUDES OF BUYER AND SALESMAN

§ 24. The Classification of Buyers

We have seen that in the construction of the sales argument the object is not only to describe the goods or offer, but also to appeal to and arouse as many buying motives as the nature of the goods and the services they render permit. From this it follows that the form which an argument or appeal may take must be varied to suit first the needs and next the temperament of the individual customer.

All customers fall into one of three classes: wholesale, specialty, or retail. Each class has a different general mental attitude toward the salesman and this attitude is again modified by the individual's temperament. In this chapter we will consider the needs of the different classes, leaving for discussion in Part II the modifications which the salesman will need to make in the presentation of his arguments to appeal to the temperament of the individual with whom he is dealing.

§ 25. The Wholesale Buyer

The buyer at wholesale may be a retail merchant or a department manager, or he may be a wholesaler's buying representative, commonly called a jobber. His purpose in buying is to sell again at a profit. Therefore he is more or less a professional appraiser of values. It is his business to scrutinize every offer of goods with a view to selecting those which will seem most attractive from the viewpoint of profit and prestige to the customers to whom he must resell

the goods. He is interested in the most attractive styles or the most durable qualities or both—solely from the viewpoint of the profit that can be made from resale.

The retail merchant's attitude is the same. In addition to the goods he needs for his regular trade he is always on the look-out for articles which will please the customers to whom he caters and thus enable him to sell more goods and make more profit.

There is, then, on the part of all buyers at wholesale an attitude of interest in any offer which they consider may be profitable for them to accept. The wholesaler is interested in any improvement in methods of manufacture; new patterns, styles, designs are items of news that he is glad to hear about. So also the retailer desires to be shown new products or new lines which offer him a better value or greater profit than those he already handles.

§ 26. The Problem of the Wholesale Buyer

Because buyers at wholesale are professional buyers and are always in the market for commodities much of their time is taken up in inspecting salesmen's samples. A score or more of representatives may call upon a buyer every week, depending upon the size of the concern and the frequency of its purchases.

A large drug store, for example, carries thousands of different items. Salesmen from many wholesale and manufacturing houses call upon the store's buyer hoping to secure his business in lines which he is already handling and which are bought from other concerns. Other salesmen call upon him with new lines and try to induce him to place them in stock and so add to his already large variety. Each salesman offers reasons, more or less good, why the druggist should either add the new line to his stock or let it replace a line he already sells.

Thus from a great variety of offerings the wholesale buyer must select a few and reject many. While he is always interested in inspecting goods, the pressure brought to bear upon him by the number of salesmen soliciting his business is such that he cannot afford to give much time to each salesman. If he did he could do little else.

§ 27. The Attitude of the Wholesale Buyer

For this reason the wholesale buyer is usually reserved, cold, and slow to respond to the efforts of the salesman with whom he has not yet done business. His time is so largely taken up by the inspection of offerings which have no interest for him that he is chary of giving encouragement until he is assured that the goods are something he *may* want. True, the salesman may be offering commodities which the buyer's firm sells and they may be good value; but the wholesaler may already be buying similar goods from some other concern. Unless he is offered a lower price or some other obvious inducement, there is no particular reason why he should favor the unknown salesman in preference to his existing connections. He therefore resists any efforts to convince him of the advantages of changing his connections.

Wholesale buyers want to find out at the beginning of the interview what the salesman has to offer—"what his proposition is"—and to decide immediately whether it is worth investigating. In the majority of cases they are actively on the defensive. They look for objections to the goods offered and for reasons why they should not buy. They know that the salesman will offer plenty of arguments in favor of buying.

§ 28. Salesman's Attitude Toward Wholesale Buyers

Thus in his approach to wholesale buyers the salesman will find little encouragement in their general attitude. They

will be mildly suspicious, cautious in revealing interest, and prepared to guard themselves against encouraging the salesman, however attractive the offer may appear. Unless they decide early in the interview that the proposition is of interest to them, they will immediately try to dismiss the salesman. The readiness with which an interview will be granted at all will depend upon the demands made upon the buyer's time and the prestige of the firm represented by the salesman. Suggestions for winning an interview are given in Chapter IX. When the salesman finally comes face to face with his customer his attitude will vary widely. In the presence of a busy wholesale buyer or the buyer for a department in a large store every effort must be concentrated on proving at the start that the salesman's line is well worth the buyer's inspection. How best to do this is discussed in Chapter XII. In the presence of the small retailer or a buyer whose business is largely covered by the salesman's line, the salesman can go to work in a more leisurely manner. Whatever the method adopted a point to bear in mind always is that the wholesale buyer is not governed in his purchase by the styles and qualities which manufacturers produce for the country at large; he is influenced wholly by his personal judgment as to the wants of his own customers.

§ 29. The Buyer's Particular Trade Must Be Considered

The appeal to the motive of profit is strengthened to the degree that the salesman is able to select from his stock one or more samples that will appeal strongly to the class of trade to which the buyer caters. To do this, as explained in Chapter X, entails careful study of the buyer's needs, of the existing stock carried, and of the goods and methods of competitors. Equipped with this information the salesman can safely be insistent that certain goods be given a trial without any fear of antagonizing the buyer. When addressing an

unknown prospect the most that a salesman can hope for in nine cases out of ten is to insert a wedge with one line of goods or a small trial order of his whole line. Subsequent orders then depend largely on the fate of the first order as exemplified in profit and turnover.

The salesman should be more insistent both upon an interview and a trial order when selling goods with a seasonal appeal or a limited turnover than when selling staples in every-day demand. The reason is plain. Only from two to four calls a year will be necessary for goods with a seasonal appeal, whereas orders for staples will need to be taken just as frequently as these are consumed. The fact that the salesman cannot call again for two or three months makes the visit of greater importance than a weekly or monthly call and justifies him in revealing more aggressiveness and insistence.

For example, the grocery salesman representing a jobber and calling upon his prospects every week may, without neglecting to present the merits of his goods if opportunity offers, be well advised to bend his first efforts toward winning the buyer's good-will. His frequent calls should in time make him well acquainted with his prospects, and through the mutual friendliness thus established he may in time secure an order. The salesman who sees his prospects only three or four times a year cannot afford to devote a number of visits to building up good-will, the importance of which increases with the frequency of meetings between salesman and buyer. He must concentrate on securing the buyer's immediate attention for the offer itself.

§ 30. The Specialty Buyer

Specialty buyers may be divided into two classes: (a) those who are always in the market for the commodity offered; (b) those who seldom need the commodity offered—

or to whom it is new. For convenience we will designate these as Class A and Class B respectively.

Class A embraces buyers of raw materials which are used in the manufacture of goods, or of office and factory supplies which need continually to be replenished.

In Class B we may group all buyers of articles which from their nature and the use to which they are to be put, do not involve an early repeat order—exemplified in such articles as pianos, books, office devices, machinery, and so on.

Class A. The attitude of buyers belonging to this class is similar to that of wholesale buyers. They are offered something they are constantly buying. While the purpose for which the goods are bought differs—i.e., wholesale buyers buy goods for resale, while the specialty buyers of Class A buy for consumption—the same desire exists to inspect new goods which may be better for the purpose in view or which may be more economical in use. The user of lubricating oil, for example, is interested in any oil which will prove more economical in keeping his machinery in good running order; the furniture manufacturer is glad to know of a quality of paint or varnish which will improve the appearance of his furniture or save time or money in operation; a new paper which can be used with greater economy attracts the publisher or printer. In short, the attitude of these buyers is one of general interest in the class of goods which they use.

Specialty buyers are also visited by salesmen representing many different concerns, each seeking business. Experience has taught them that among the many offers they receive few are worth investigation; so like wholesale buyers, they are reserved, cautious, on the defensive, and not inclined to give encouragement until they are sure of their ground, for they know that a salesman who has been encouraged is difficult to dismiss.

Class B. Buyers belonging to this class as a rule have

no previous interest in the article offered. The salesman offering a set of books, a new office appliance, an insurance policy, finds a wall of indifference facing him. His prospects have felt no need for his goods and have got along well enough without them. There is neither general interest in the article nor curiosity to inspect it. The business man approached by the insurance salesman is apt to be even antagonistic. Until he begins to realize something of the benefits of insurance his inclination is to say abruptly to the salesman, "No thank you, I am really not interested." The salesman's task is to break down this indifference which in some cases may take the form of latent opposition.

§ 31. Salesman's Attitude Toward Specialty Buyers, Class A

There is no royal road to the favor of the specialty buyer. Persistence and persistence alone counts in winning an interview and permission to explain the merits of one's goods. The salesman will, of course, try to make a sale on his first visit; but even if he does not succeed, he must visit the buyer on each trip. After he has called a number of times he will probably succeed in establishing that feeling of friendliness which is often a useful preliminary to a sale.

Like the wholesale salesman who calls infrequently, the specialty salesman is justified in being insistent, not to say aggressive, because his visit then assumes a certain importance in the buyer's eyes. He may make his long trip an excuse for persisting in the attempt to obtain an immediate interview. When he has gained the interview he is justified in asking for an immediate decision for or against his offer. On both sides it is recognized that as he calls only once in several months his visit is relatively more important than that of the man who can drop in every week or two. Such a visit deserves greater consideration on the part of the buyer and calls for more energy on the part of the salesman.

§ 32. Salesman's Attitude Toward Specialty Buyers, Class B

The specialty salesman catering to this class has even more inertia to overcome. He knows that the buyer has no general interest in the product predisposing him to investigate the salesman's claims. Selling to the specialty buyer who is ignorant of his offer requires courage and perseverance in a high degree. The salesman must not take "No" too easily. His manner must be serious and enthusiastically earnest. He must be primed with arguments to appeal to many varied motives and temperaments. He must use every energy in gaining the buyer's interest at the opening of the interview and his enthusiasm must be great enough to secure and hold attention while arguing in favor of his goods.

§ 33. Summary

Broadly considered, wholesale selling requires persistence allied with the ability to make friends and to radiate good humor. Specialty selling requires persistence combined with enthusiastic earnestness and profound knowledge of the goods. The salesman can make the skeptical buyer believe in his offer only when he earnestly believes in it himself.

CHAPTER IV

THE PREPARATION OF THE SELLING TALK

§ 34. Analysis of the Talking Point

To build up the sales argument in a logical way so that it will make its most powerful appeal, the nature of the offer, whether of goods or of service, must first be analyzed. This analysis will reveal those special features—often called “talking points” or “points of contact”—which can be elaborated so as to appeal to as many varied buying motives as possible. Everything sold or presumed to be salable has these talking points, otherwise it is an obviously inferior product and unworthy of a salesman’s attention. The task is to weave these various talking points into a fluent sales talk which is readily adaptable to every situation and to every type of buyer.

Each talking point must be made to appeal to one or more definite buying motives. The salesman marshals these talking points and presents them by means of metaphor or simile, as will be explained in Chapter VIII, in a way to make them strike the imagination of the buyer—and stick in the mind.

An intricate, expensive, and complicated article has obviously a large number of talking points. A plain and simply constructed article in every-day use may seem to have few. Analysis, however, will reveal that much can be said about anything offered for sale, and still more about the advantages of any offer to a particular buyer. The salesman’s problem lies mainly in rejecting points which are insignificant. Yet even points of quite secondary importance should be studied and elaborated into arguments, as these may prove efficacious

when other and apparently stronger talking points fail of effect.

§ 35. Constructing the Sales Arguments for a Wholesale Sale

Let us take as our first example for analysis that prosaic every-day article, a loaf of bread. One loaf of bread looks much like another. In price, shape, appearance, and ingredients it is practically the same as other loaves. Still, if a concern bakes bread in sufficient quantity to warrant the employment of salesmen, there must be something special about its loaves.

Let us presume that the bread to be analyzed is a special advertised brand called White's Cream Bread, retailing at the usual price. In the sale of such a product as bread there is no sales argument that competing concerns cannot use. Nevertheless, the salesman must prepare a list of his talking points regardless of whether these are used by competitors, as the arguments may not be known to his customers. Facts which seem obvious to one person may be new and interesting information to another.

The prospect in the case in point is probably a retail grocer who buys for resale. Therefore the talking points that will appeal to him must first of all be based on his desire for gain. A list of these is:

- Profit
- Demand
- Price
- Terms
- Service

Other instincts that might be appealed to in a less degree are imitation and caution.

A prospect will probably be influenced in placing an order if the fact is brought to his attention that competing grocers

also buy the bread. If the bakery enjoys an established reputation the satisfaction of caution will be appealed to by emphasizing the fact that the bread is furnished by a reputable and well-known concern.

The grocer will also want to know something about the processes of manufacture so that he can explain why he particularly recommends White's Cream Bread. He knows that if he can give the consumer good reasons for buying, his sales will increase. And so other obvious talking points will be those relating to the bread's

Ingredients
Nourishment
Palatability
Purity

We will now build up these talking points into arguments which may serve as "points of contact" with the grocer, bearing in mind that these little talks merely illustrate the salesman's complete equipment, from which he selects only those arguments which occasion demands or which he believes will make the strongest appeal.

§ 36. The Appeal to Profit

The argument appealing to the dominant motive of profit might be elaborated in this way:

"Your bread business, Mr. Jones, should be the most important department of your store. If it isn't it can be made into the most important department for these reasons:

"First, you may not realize that on every dollar's worth of bread you buy daily you make an actual profit of nearly \$80 a year. Just figure it out. A dollar's worth of bread at 8 cents a loaf means roughly twelve loaves. On twelve loaves you are making a profit of 24 cents a day, or nearly \$1.50 a week, which is \$78 a year. As you do not pay for

the bread until it is sold you invest no money in producing this \$78.

"Second, when your customers buy bread they come into daily contact with your store. This is valuable because those who now come into the store only occasionally, when they buy bread from you will get into the habit of visiting your store regularly. Bread, like milk, is a household commodity that the consumer must order daily. Therefore, to handle a well-known reliable brand such as ours must increase your business by creating more regular customers for other things besides bread.

"Suppose, for example, the housewife who trades with you runs out of potatoes. She thinks she will get along without them for the day. She finds, however, that she is running short of bread and she needs another loaf. Consequently, she rings you up on the phone or sends a messenger or calls herself to ask you to deliver a peck of potatoes, perhaps some sugar, maybe a bag of flour, together with the loaf of bread she needs. Bread may thus bring far more profit into your store than you get from its sale. Yet, as before explained, you can make as much as \$78 a year on every dollar's worth you buy day by day without the investment of a single cent on your part. You see the importance of handling bread and especially such a line as White's Cream Bread which, once tried, is invariably used again and again."

§ 37. Demand

The argument as to demand naturally follows that of profit. Here the emphasis can be laid on the fact that to refuse to handle a brand of bread for which a demand has been created is to refuse business:

"The sale of White's Cream Bread is so great that people of this community expect almost every grocer to keep it. The grocer who does not is refusing business. You see, Mr.

Jones, we have been advertising this bread since 1875 and during more than forty years' experience as bakers we have built up such a reputation for quality that many people insist upon having our bread and no other. We sell two thousand loaves a day right in this section of the town and that means a loaf every day to every second family. Many of your customers who come into your store only occasionally insist upon White's Bread and no other. If you don't keep it, you simply turn away business in many other lines."

§ 38. Price

Price in its relation to profit has been already covered. The dealer may be thinking that he can make more profit by selling a cheaper brand of bread. The following argument meets this objection before it is made:

"The price is 8 cents a loaf—the usual price for bread sold at wholesale. We cannot offer you any special inducement as to price. We don't think it is a good thing to do so. A firm that offers to sell you a loaf of bread for 6 or 7 cents is going to injure your business. A loaf of bread of the quality of ours cannot be made and sold for a profit at less than 8 cents. A loaf at a lower price simply means cheaper ingredients; it lacks the palatability of our bread; it fails to please customers; and in the end you lose more than you might gain through the extra cent or two profit on each loaf sold."

§ 39. Terms

The terms are another aspect of price which can be set forth so as to appeal to the motive of profit:

"You make a settlement of our account once a week. You will have sold from seven to ten days' supply of bread before you are asked to pay for it. Suppose you sell fifty loaves of bread a day (and many of our customers sell a hundred),

that means \$5 a day income or roughly \$50 in hand before you are asked to settle your account. Thus instead of investing any money in stocking our goods, we really loan you a certain sum in cash with which to carry on your business for brief periods."

§ 40. Service

Here the emphasis can be laid on those things which are done to help the dealer sell the goods—and thus make more profit:

"We give two deliveries every day—one early in the morning and the other at noon. If you wish, we shall be glad to supply you with a case in which to store the bread—an attractive piece of store equipment that you will be glad to have standing on your counter.

"As you have not yet handled our line, we shall be glad to help you create a demand for it. If you will give us the names of your customers we will send out advertising postal cards, each one good for a loaf of our bread at your store. We will also, if you wish, supply you with a list of good class people in your district. We redeem these postal cards from you at the regular selling price of 10 cents each. This is a special advertising scheme which none of our competitors offer. Experience has proved that it will always start sales and incidentally will bring many new customers into your store."

§ 41. Reputation

The dealer is interested in the bread's reputation only so far as this helps to sell more bread. Therefore the argument takes the following form:

"So far, Mr. Jones, we have considered only the profit on the sale of our bread. Now let us consider in how many ways our bread will appeal to the consumer who comes into

your store to ask for it because she knows and likes our brand; or who having once tried our brand for the same reason will buy it again and again.

"Our concern was founded in 1875 by the father of the present manager. His idea was to bake the best bread that could possibly be baked at the price. That idea has been lived up to for more than forty years. We have customers of forty years' standing on our books. We hold them because we satisfy them, etc., etc."

§ 42. Ingredients

The eloquence of the salesman when describing the product in detail need be limited only by the patience of the listener:

"In the manufacture of White's Cream Bread the several thousand quarts of milk that are used daily are supplied from our own farm in order to insure milk with the real creamy flavor. Our cows are pasture-fed when the grass is green and growing, and in winter they are housed in dairies which are as bright and sanitary as a new pin. Consequently, the milk that goes into this bread is milk of the purest quality, unskimmed, rich, creamy, with a high percentage of butter fat. To let you into a trade secret, Mr. Jones, it is the use of milk of superior quality that is largely the secret of finely flavored bread. None of our competitors go to the trouble of securing only the best quality of milk and for this reason few of them equal us in this matter of quality. Many of them use skimmed milk for economy's sake. You can't make tasty bread from skimmed milk.

"As regards the flour that goes into this bread, we cannot control it quite to the extent that we control the milk supply. We do, however, buy only high-grade standard brands that have a reputation behind them for quality and in this way we maintain our own reputation."

§ 43. Palatability

"The ingredients put into our bread make it more pleasing to the taste than any other brand which does not enjoy the same advantages in its sources of supply. You may sell a certain amount of bread or any other food by advertising; but what sells food in the largest quantity in the long run is the satisfied palates of those who eat it. We believe our bread pleases the palate as much as any bread can, and we know we please a larger number of palates in this town than any other bread manufacturer. Just try our brand yourself, Mr. Jones, and see if you don't agree with me. . . ."

§ 44. Every Proposition Has Its Talking Points

Enough, perhaps, has been written about this special brand of bread. The reader may object that the article chosen for analysis is a standard article with a history and a reputation behind it and with unusual advantages in the way of service attached to it, and that therefore it is easily possible to build up a convincing sales talk. But what has been said in this case applies in broad outline to all other brands of bread. The point is that even if you take such an insipid, tasteless, every-day sort of article as bread which hasn't much beauty about it nor much that can be claimed for it on the score of palatability or even profit, it is still possible to make out a strong selling case.

It rests with the salesman to analyze the offer he is presenting and ascertain its talking points. On this framework he then constructs those arguments which will appeal to every type of customer and to almost every buying motive.

§ 45. The Talking Points of a Specialty

If so much can be said about such an article as bread, how much more interesting must be the arguments in favor of a specialty of any kind. A salesman handling a specialty

at a fairly high price will rarely need to construct his own selling talk. The general practice among firms of any standing is to train their representatives in the art of demonstrating the product before sending them on the road. Some houses maintain special training schools and publish sales manuals and other literature in which the summarized experience of the sales force is presented for the benefit of the beginners. These manuals embody the experience of hundreds of men in tackling a special sales problem. Certain methods bring better and quicker results than others and these the salesman is expected to study and apply.

The elaboration of the talking points of such an article as a piece of machinery, an office device, or an automobile, would occupy many pages of this volume. To illustrate the fact that there is never any dearth of facts that can be elaborated in this way, take, for example, the service offered by a laundry. A laundry sells only service and a service of any kind is classed among specialties. We will suppose that Green's Laundry offers its services at prevailing rates and that it is much like any other laundry. In the sale of service, the motive to appeal to is satisfaction; in such a competitive field as the laundry business the arguments in favor of one laundry over another will finally hinge upon satisfaction in proportion to the price paid.

Some of the talking points that appeal to this motive are listed below. Every laundry offers most of these services but not every customer knows that they are offered:

- Individual attention
- Starching to individual taste
- Dating
- Packing
- Repairing
- Delivery
- Dependability

Will not unduly tear, shrink, or fade **fabrics**
Liberal adjustment
Sanitation
Thoroughness
Etc.

It is not necessary here to elaborate each of these talking points into an argument which appeals to the motives of satisfaction, pride, caution, and so on, leading a housewife to select one laundry rather than another. After the salesman has ascertained his talking points and decided on the motive to appeal to, he will have little difficulty in constructing suitable sales arguments.

§ 46. Analysis of Goods Not Needed for a Retail Sale

The refinement of analysis so frequently necessary before a convincing sales talk can be built up for either a wholesale or a specialty sale would be entirely out of place in a retail sale. The retail salesman should know a few facts as to quality. If, for instance, he is selling fabrics, carpets, tools, or anything in which wearing quality is an important factor, he should study his goods sufficiently to be able to explain to the customer wherein lies the value of the thing under inspection. When wearing qualities count for less in determining the purchase than looks, style, or palatability, desire can be aroused by appealing to pleasure, or to pride and satisfaction. Instead of a minute knowledge of a particular line, the retail salesperson requires a general all-round knowledge of his stock. This matter is discussed in Chapter XXII.

§ 47. Method of Learning Arguments

After deciding what to say and in how many different ways to say it, the salesman should write each talking point on a separate card and on the reverse side the appropriate sales argument and the buying motive to which appeal is

made. Then, by shuffling the cards and referring to the face of first one and then another for its talking point, he can practice the delivery of his arguments until he is approximately "word perfect."

Many helpful suggestions for the construction of effective sales arguments will be found in various chapters of this work. Meanwhile too much emphasis cannot possibly be laid upon the importance of this drill. The salesman must first carefully think over what he is going to say and how his appeal can be most effectively worded. He must then so drill himself in every point that he is able to explain the merits of his offer clearly and fluently—in the most convincing way.

During the course of every interview he will find various objections raised to making the purchase. Some of these objections may have little bearing upon his goods or his offer; methods of meeting them are discussed in Chapters XVI and XVII. For the present the salesman need only bear in mind that this preliminary preparation of the sales talk and forecast of objections are absolutely essential if he is to meet the buyer thoroughly equipped and armed at every point.

§ 48. Advantages of Learning Arguments Verbatim

The salesman who fails to learn his arguments verbatim is obliged to concentrate his thought while talking upon what he is going to say next. If the talking points and the phraseology in which they are expressed are firmly fixed in his mind, he can present them like the finished actor who has learned his part—naturally and without effort. He can then give close attention to what the prospect is saying and be ready to take advantage of every opening which will permit an effective reply to a question or objection.

If the salesman thoroughly masters and memorizes his argument in its numerous phases, there will be no danger of repeating the argument as if by rote in half-hearted

fashion, and still less of stuttering and stumbling. He need never be at a loss for power of expression or a ready reply.

Nothing impresses a prospective buyer more than for a salesman to state his case in crisp and logical phraseology and meet every question and every objection courteously but decisively. On the other hand nothing does so much to create distrust as inability either to explain the merits of an offer logically and readily or to meet an objection when raised.

§ 49. Summary

To repeat, the salesman who takes his work earnestly and seriously will never trust to a fluent and ready tongue for the construction of his argument. Many a glib talker who admires his own verbosity only irritates the buyer because he fails to present his argument *clearly and logically*. To present a thing clearly and logically it must be put down in black and white and closely studied. The salesman is not an orator. He is a cold matter-of-fact logician. Logic can be built up only by careful and concentrated thought.

A sales talk does not consist of a mere description of what the salesman has to offer the customer or what the thing offered will do for the customer. A convincing argument is a composite appeal to the buying motive which is strongest in a particular case; to the temperament of the customer; and to the general attitude of the customer toward the salesman. This argument, as will be explained in the next chapter, is to be so modified that insensibly it attracts attention, rouses interest, and from interest leads to desire and action.

CHAPTER V

THE CUSTOMER'S MENTAL JOURNEY

§ 50. The Mental Stages

The discussion in the two preceding chapters leads to an elementary principle in salesmanship: To effect a sale the mind of the buyer must be gradually led from its existing mood to the state which will cause him to buy.

The prospective customer may be in any conceivable frame of mind. His mood may be good-natured and friendly or irritable and discourteous. He may be already interested in the offer, indifferent, or even antagonistic. Possibly he has recently bought a supply of goods similar to those offered—in consequence he is not inclined to purchase.

Whatever the attitude of mind in which the buyer may be found the salesman must by means of his personality and the arguments in favor of his goods, cause the prospect's mind to pass through certain mental stages—to take a mental journey as it were—progressing along the route of:

ATTENTION
INTEREST
and
DESIRE
which leads to
ACTION

This mental journey cannot be likened to a railroad trip which begins at attention and terminates at action with interest and desire as the stopping places en route, because attention shades into interest and desire is translated into action before one can realize where the first state ends and the second

begins. The point for the salesman to bear in mind is that as the buyer knows nothing about the offer he is apt to be indifferent and on the defensive. He must in consequence be made to take this mental journey before he is transformed from a prospect into a customer. No sale can be made until attention is first given to the proposition, until interest is awakened, desire for the commodity aroused, and action finally secured by tacit acquiescence or by means of the signature on the dotted line.

§ 51. The Mental Stages in a Retail Sale

When a simple retail purchase is made a customer's mind insensibly passes through these mental stages. When the housewife decides to buy something for the breakfast table her attention is drawn to the matter by the demands of the appetite; interest is aroused in satisfying this demand in the most satisfactory way that her means permit; she desires to purchase certain things and so action promptly follows. These stages may be reached almost simultaneously when the purchase is a daily need or a trivial matter which needs little consideration. But as the importance of the purchase or the service increases and its price rises more thought is devoted to the expenditure; and this thought then becomes more clearly reflected in the four stages already enumerated.

Carrying the analysis a degree further we will in this chapter consider each of these mental stages in detail. In later chapters additional suggestions will be given as to how the sales arguments are to be constructed so as to carry the mind of the reluctant prospect from apathetic indifference or even antagonism to a sale.

§ 52. Attention

There are many ways of attracting attention, some of them uncommon and even bizarre, but it is no part of sales-

manship to adopt unusual methods merely for the sake of attracting attention. Moreover, such methods usually fail in their effect because of their crudity or inappropriateness. When a prospective customer is first approached the aim should simply be to turn him from his indifferent or antagonistic attitude into the non-committal one of at least being willing to listen to the proposition. This transformation may be effected by means of the opening sentence or merely by the approach of the salesman himself. If he is so fortunate as to be equipped with a particularly pleasing personality and come forward with a smile that disarms suspicion because of its frank geniality, he may at once secure the kind of attention he is seeking. Not all salesmen, however, are equipped in this happy way. So assuming merely that there is nothing unpleasing in voice, bearing, or address which will create a feeling of antagonism in the customer's mind, everything depends upon the effect made by the opening sentence.

The cash register salesman, for instance, when he first introduces himself to a customer does not open with a commonplace introduction such as, "I represent so and so," or "I have called to sell you a register," or "I should like to talk to you about our registers"; he puts it rather in this way, "I want to interest you in our new methods for taking care of transactions with customers in your store." The storekeeper is not interested in a register as a register, nor in the company which sells them. But he is interested in recording transactions which take place in his store.

Having thus secured attention and to some extent interest, the salesman proceeds to transform this interest into desire by explaining in how many ways a cash register will enable better care to be taken of the store's transactions—information which has been obtained by a previous diagnosis of the dealer's needs.

§ 53. Securing Attention by Mail

Attention to the offer is sometimes secured in other ways. Frequently the customer is advised in advance of the salesman's call, either by means of a personal letter which outlines the nature of the offer, or by means of circulars, booklets, or other advertising literature. The aim in each case is to draw attention to the advantages of the thing advertised with the hope that when a salesman calls he will be given an interview.

This method is generally adopted in selling a specialty. Frequently the customer is "circularized" several times with literature specially written to arouse attention. Thus the ground is prepared so that when a representative calls the customer is sufficiently interested in the proposition to desire further information.

§ 54. Interest

Attention is gradually transformed into interest in measure as the buyer's willingness to listen is changed into an active desire to obtain information. In nine cases out of ten the stage of interest is reached when an acknowledgment of the merits of the offer can be drawn from the general type of buyer by means of adroit questions and he himself begins to ask questions; or when the taciturn, capricious, or critical type of customer begins to detect flaws and disadvantages in the offer. In this way the latter reveals his desire to learn more about it. He may even go so far as to acknowledge that he is willing to consider the proposition. When this stage of interest is reached the salesman can begin to appeal to the particular buying motive which the nature of the offer and the temperament of the buyer may indicate should be touched. By this means interest which is more or less impersonal is transformed into a strong desire for personal ownership.

§ 55. Desire

As attention shades into interest so desire shades into action or a definite promise to buy. A faint spark of interest is gradually fanned into the flame of desire. This can be done, as will be more fully explained later, by imbuing the customer with the salesman's own enthusiasm. Unless he is enthusiastic about the merits of his goods and the advantages to be derived from their possession, he has little chance of rousing the buying motive. To effect a sale, desire must be made so strong that the benefits to be derived from the offer loom larger in the mind than the money which must be paid out. Until the salesman is sure that the desire to possess is so strong that price is no longer the chief consideration, he should not attempt to impel the prospect along his mental journey to the final stage of action—a positive decision to buy and to buy *now*.

§ 56. Action

A prospective customer may desire to take advantage of an offer because it represents good value in every way, but this does not necessarily imply that a sale will follow. It is human nature to vacillate before purchasing and this vacillation grows in proportion to the expenditure involved and the customer's total income. The more momentous the purchase the greater becomes the fear, either definite or intangible but none the less present, that possibly a mistake is being made or that better value for the same money may be found elsewhere. In consequence caution impels the prospective purchaser to take plenty of time before coming to a final decision.

When the customer is a keen judge of values or enjoys seeking out bargains, as in the case of certain types of women shoppers, this vacillation frequently shows itself just at the moment when a sale might be expected. This inability to make up one's mind often appears when even a trifling pur-

chase is to be made. How much more, therefore, is it to be expected when the purchase represents an investment of any importance.

Methods of gently leading the customer from desire to action or a positive decision to buy are discussed in Chapter XVIII. For the present let us consider the mental processes which cause this infirmity of purpose in the consummation of almost every important sale.

§ 57. Why the Customer Vacillates

A young married man may spend weeks in looking for a house. Many possible dwellings are inspected until finally one is found which is just what he is looking for. The home fits in with his ideas exactly; the price is reasonable; yet he may spend weeks in thinking the matter over. Although he acknowledges that the house suits him in every way, he wants to be sure that the purchase will not be regretted later.

Similar mental processes are at work when any other purchase of moment is contemplated. The purchaser of, say, an automobile inspects several makes which fall within the price he is prepared to pay and compares the advantages of one model with another. There seems little to choose between them and each reveals certain points of superiority. He wonders if by looking further he might not find something which would suit him still better or which would offer greater value for his money. He is apprehensive as to whether the up-keep of the car will not cost more than is claimed—perhaps for this reason he had better buy a lower-priced car. Questions such as these constantly arise in his mind at the crucial moment and cause him to hesitate if the expenditure looms large in proportion to his income.

When the wholesale buyer has to come to the point of ordering, such thoughts as these may pass through his mind: "Perhaps these goods do not come up to my expectations";

"They may not sell as well as I expect"; "Possibly I ought not to buy so many"; "Perhaps I can get better deliveries from another concern"—and so on. When considerations such as these are so strong that the buyer is unable to come to a definite decision, he tries as a rule to postpone action until a later date or until the salesman calls again. The salesman, realizing the reason for this indecision, must be equipped with arguments which will help the customer to make up his mind.

§ 58. Summary

Briefly summarized this chapter emphasizes the fact that the construction of the sales talk must be based on the change which is presumed gradually to take place in the mental attitude of the customer.

The salesman should have at his command a certain number of arguments specifically worded to arouse attention—arguments which may or may not relate to his offer. In some cases a description of the goods or the advantages of an offer may be a very small factor in the complete sales argument. As we shall see in later chapters some customers will be influenced more by an account of what others have done than by a description of the goods.

In fanning the spark of attention into the flame of desire much will depend upon the tactful adaptation of the sales talk to the type of mind to be influenced; unless the salesman has the tactful enthusiasm needed to convey to others his own earnest belief in the advantages of his offer he will not be successful in his calling.

Finally the salesman must be equipped with telling rejoinders to a number of objections, one or more of which are sure to be raised in almost every sale. The art of closing and combating the natural tendency to procrastinate or vacillate, the culminating part of the salesman's work, needs separate study as outlined in Chapters XVIII and XIX.

CHAPTER VI

MODES AND METHODS OF AROUSING INTEREST

§ 59. The Manner of the Salesman

The art of attracting favorable attention so that the customer at once reveals his willingness to listen to the salesman's story is worth careful study and preparation. Much will depend upon the salesman's manner, appearance, and method of approach, as explained in Chapters XI and XXIX, which deal with his general attitude and bearing when in the presence of a customer. In this chapter we will consider the preparatory work that will help him to win the favorable attention which is necessary before interest can be aroused.

The salesman's argumentative equipment should include several opening sentences constructed with the object of making a favorable impression "right off the bat." The nature of every offer varies and every sale has its own talking points. In some cases it may be advantageous to compress within the opening statement as much information as possible concerning the advantages of an offer; in others the opening remarks may mention only one particular feature of the offer in which the customer is presumed to take paramount interest.

The wording of this opening statement will be indicated if the goods or the service are regarded, not from the point of view of their special features or their superiority over others, but of what they will do for, or how they will help, a particular customer in his own business.

§ 60. Illustrative Methods

A salesman who handles expensive machinery used in the manufacture of concrete bricks, opens his selling talk in this

way: "Mr. Brown, I have a proposition to explain to you that you will find will pay you 45 per cent profit on your investment." His prospects are contractors with large investments in equipment. Attention is thus aroused by an appeal to the desire for profit.

"Good morning, Mrs. Jones, I've been asked to call upon you about a matter of special interest to you and to your children," says the encyclopedia salesman at the opening of his interview. This appeals to a mother's pride in her offspring and so she desires to know more. He emphasizes the need for a work of reference by an appeal to the motive of pride. He explains how the encyclopedia will help the children in their studies and enable them to make more rapid progress through the various high school grades.

If a vacuum cleaner salesman does not know the name of his prospect when calling from house to house, he uses the name of a nearby neighbor as a means of arousing interest: "I have just come from Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Walton whom you know. They have both adopted our method of keeping the house cleaner and more sanitary with about one-tenth of the present labor." Attention is at once aroused and interest awakened by an appeal to the instinct of imitation.

"Good morning, Mr. Jones, I have a little device to show you that will save you money and is as big a necessity to you as insurance on your home," says the check protector salesman. A direct appeal is thus made to the motive of gain. The prospect asks, "What is it?" whereupon the salesman replies, "A method of protecting your checks against falsification and insuring you against loss from forgery."

§ 61. The Enthusiastic Method

When a hat salesman calls on a milliner only to be told that her stock is complete and she requires nothing more at present he changes his customary method of approach. He

knows that now he must plunge right into his sales talk and use those arguments he employs to arouse desire. So with the utmost earnestness and with all the enthusiasm he can muster he declares:

"Why, Mrs. Vere, it just happens on this trip that I've brought with me *the* most stylish hats I've *ever* carried and I *must* positively let you see them even if you are all stocked up." To use this opening sentence as a regular argument would, of course, be foolish and soon blunt its effect; but to keep it discreetly in reserve for such a situation as mentioned often secures an opening and thus an order that would otherwise be lost. Many buyers try to head off the salesman with the assertion that they are "all stocked up" when they really mean that they do not feel in the mood to inspect his samples at the time of his call. Though there may be no intention to purchase, interest is apt to be aroused simply by the enthusiasm of the salesman's manner and so an inspection is made of his stock. When enthusiasm is appropriate, when the salesman really believes that certain points of his offer or certain features of his merchandise make a specially powerful appeal, he is entitled to wax enthusiastic. This sort of legitimate enthusiasm, indeed, should be part of every approach.

§ 62. The Simple, Straightforward Method

If the sale is of small value, a simple straightforward sales talk may be all that is needed to arouse interest. For example, the hosiery salesman says to the dry-goods merchant: "Good morning, Mr. Brown, I want you to see some of the new patterns in hose we have just brought out. They're the most attractive colors and shades I have seen for many seasons."

The coffee salesman says: "Mr. Brown, I want you to stock our line of coffee because it will be to your interest to do so. You know there is a big demand for our coffee be-

cause it pleases the palates of the people who have once tried it on the recommendation of our advertisements."

When the customer is already acquainted with the goods or knows the salesman, a simple description of his offer is all that is needed. When both goods and salesman are unknown the customer must be offered something more concrete than words, whether this be samples, a catalogue, a picture, or a demonstration. The display of samples or the demonstration of what the goods will do is a phase of the salesman's work which should always be carefully rehearsed before the interview.

§ 63. The Demonstration Method

The quickest method of transforming interest into desire is to show the customer just what the goods will do. Of course it is not always possible to do this. Wearing apparel, for instance, is sold as much for its style appeal and appearance as for its wearing qualities and the only thing that it is possible to demonstrate when displaying apparel of any kind is that it will withstand so much wear and tear. Aside from the finer articles of wear, however, most merchandise has one or more special points of superiority which can be demonstrated.

To take an example, it would not be thought that lamp chimneys lend themselves to the demonstration method. Yet one salesman selling all kinds of glassware makes a practice as soon as he enters a store in which he is unknown, of buying an ordinary lamp chimney.

"Don't trouble to wrap it up," he says to the proprietor and to the latter's surprise he picks up the chimney he has just bought and rolls it along the floor. When it comes in contact with any object it naturally breaks in pieces. Without a word he takes one of his own chimneys out of his sample case and puts it to exactly the same test. His own chimney

stands the ordeal without even cracking. He then turns to the proprietor and says: "A lamp chimney which will stand such a severe test as that is the kind that will resist heat and have long life and is the kind of chimney that keeps your customers satisfied. I'd like, Mr. Jones, to show you my complete line." Such a method of approach naturally interests the prospect and at once wins an opening.

In the same way a cutlery salesman who calls on the hardware trade invariably introduces himself to a prospect by asking: "May I borrow a short piece of copper wire for a moment, please?" On receiving the wire he opens his sample case, takes out a pair of shears, and cuts the wire in two. Passing the shears over for the customer's inspection he says: "You notice that they are not marked at all. Now that's the kind of shears you want to offer to your trade. It's just a sample of my whole line." Then without any more ado he begins to spread out his line on the retailer's counter.

§ 64. Demonstration of Food

A utility article can often be demonstrated in one way or another. Foods and drinks also lend themselves readily to such a physical demonstration.

A salesman representing a bakery, after calling a number of times on a provision store dealer without success, determined to try to interest him by a demonstration. On his next visit he took with him a loaf of bread daintily wrapped in a napkin and packed in a collapsible carton with a small jar of honey and a sharp knife. He entered the store just before lunch hour when appetite is at its keenest. Walking to the rear where the proprietor's desk stood, he unpacked the carton on the counter, cut the loaf of bread into thin slices and spread two or three with honey. Handing a slice to the proprietor he said: "I have brought you a nutritious lunch. Just try that bread and tell me if you don't think it's the best flavored

loaf you ever tasted." He then passed several slices to the clerks in the store who were unoccupied with customers and asked for their opinions also. He ate two or three slices with huge relish himself and with ejaculations between mouthfuls to the effect, "Isn't this fine?" "Did you ever taste such bread as this?" All agreed that it was indeed very fine bread—the best they'd ever tasted. The impression created by this enthusiastic demonstration gave the salesman the opportunity to talk business that he had previously ineffectually sought.

§ 65. Demonstration in a Retail Store

The retail salesman can use similar methods to great advantage. In large department stores clerks are frequently trained to demonstrate a particular thing as a means of catching the eye and stimulating the interest of both customers and of persons who are merely looking around. The demand for a novelty, such as a new cosmetic of special virtues, a new song, or anything with a touch of originality is invariably stimulated in this way. These demonstrations are frequently made with the object of collecting a crowd, but it is just as practical to demonstrate in this way to a single customer.

In the grocery department, for instance, the appeal of almost everything can be accentuated merely by suggesting that the customer taste it. At the perfumery counter perfume can be sprayed on a customer's handkerchief; at the stationery counter the fountain pen salesman can ask his customers to write with a pen, to test the feel of a certain quality of note paper or the tensile strength of commercial writing paper, and so on in almost every case.

The demonstration method is a practical application of theory. Instead of the customer's being told, he is shown what the goods will do. An appeal to the eye is always more potent in its effect than appeal to the ear and an appeal to the palate is in suitable cases the most powerful appeal of all.

§ 66. First Impressions of Goods Important

If one of the features of the article being demonstrated is its daintiness or purity and the merchandise in use becomes soiled or damaged an unfavorable impression will be created which will kill any awakening interest. A favorable first impression is extremely important in salesmanship whether it is an impression of the salesman himself or of the thing he has to sell. This is generally recognized when the sale involves a large expenditure, but is frequently neglected when the disbursement is trifling.

When a certain real estate salesman drives a prospect in his automobile to a house he wishes to rent, he usually approaches from the end of the road which gives the best possible view, even if this necessitates a lengthy detour. An advertising concern engaged in renting billboard space pays particular attention to the important matter of first impressions. The exact spot from which a particular board can be seen to the best advantage is first located. When a prospective advertiser is taken to view the "open" boards, the chauffeur knows to a foot where to stop the automobile. Then and not until then does the salesman point out the board space offered for rent.

§ 67. Carefulness in Displaying

The way in which the goods are handled will convey an impression of quality or inferiority. When the jewelry salesman displays a fine necklace or a diamond ring he holds it up carefully and looks at it admiringly. When he lays it down on the case, it is placed on a velvet pad. The same principle can be applied to ordinary goods. They should be handled carefully, thus implying that they are of value. To toss them carelessly on the counter suggests that they are not worth much. A good motto to adopt is: "Handle the goods as if they are worth a million dollars."

Such must be the motto of a salesman offering bottled pickles to grocers. Each bottle in his sample case is wrapped in a square of velvet. As he takes a sample out of the case he holds it carefully, slowly unwraps the covering, lays it down on the counter, and sets the bottle methodically in its center. His manner suggests the superior quality of the goods and the velvet on which the bottle stands enhances its appearance.

§ 68. Connecting Selling Talk with Prospect's Interest

When other methods fail attention can sometimes be transformed into interest by linking the unknown offer with something in which the prospect is interested or with which he is already familiar. The closer the connecting link the better. It may be difficult to connect these interests in a natural way and in that case a purely arbitrary connection is all that is possible.

A specialty salesman who sells advertising usually meets with his fair share of rebuffs. Often his greatest difficulty is to secure a hearing in which he will have time to interest his listener and sometimes he must catch his man on the wing as it were.

A salesman handling trade paper advertising called on the advertising manager of a large manufacturing concern whom he had failed hitherto to interview. On this occasion he chanced to meet the prospect in the vestibule of the office.

"Mr. Denman," he said, "I was in Wilson's shoe store out in Medland the other day buying a pair of shoes and had some conversation with him regarding your line which he handles. He told me that you'd built up quite a business in it and I learned what was to me a very interesting fact, that you sell direct to dealers through several branch houses rather than through jobbers. It occurred to me that our publication would be a very profitable medium for you to use for these three reasons: . . ."

The salesman apparently tied up the prospect's interest with trade paper advertising although there was no legitimate connection between the two. This opening was sufficiently interesting to the customer to make him willing to hear what the salesman had to say and thus it gained the opportunity to talk business.

§ 69. The Connecting Link May Be a Name

The connecting link may be only a name or a subject in which the prospect is interested, as in the following examples, yet it may suffice to gain a hearing.

A salesman selling loose-leaf ledgers approached the manager of a manufacturing concern in this way: "Mr. Jones, I understand that you are so interested in modern efficiency methods that you have hired Mr. Smith as efficiency engineer. I feel quite sure, therefore, that you will be especially interested in our system for increasing office efficiency."

A certain insurance salesman after he has obtained the name of a prospect from an existing client invariably opens the conversation with the potential client in this way: "I was talking the other day with your friend, Mr. Smith, and your name came up in the conversation. I understand from him that you have not yet protected your family against accident to yourself. I feel that under the circumstances you would not object to my submitting a proposition that would fit your needs."

In all these examples the salesman links his offer with somebody or something in which the prospect is already interested although the connection may be purely arbitrary.

§ 70. Arousing Interest by Appealing to Curiosity

Interest can sometimes be aroused indirectly by an appeal to curiosity. This method is frequently used in advertising and the "teaser" advertisements which appear from time to time

are examples of attempts to arouse interest in this way. Such advertisements do not give the name or describe the thing advertised but tell the reader to watch for other announcements which do so. Such queries as "Do you know what X-Tom is?" "See this space next week"; "Watch this space; it has a message for you"; "\$1,000 in gold for some lucky person. See next week's 'Bludgeon' "—these are all teaser advertisements designed to arouse the curiosity of the reader to such a degree that he will be sufficiently interested to investigate. While this method is rarely applicable to salesmanship it can in some cases be used with good effect.

§ 71. Example of an Appeal to Curiosity

A salesman selling toilet goods to drug stores had tried on several occasions to secure an order from a large store in an important Pacific Coast town. He made repeated attempts to awaken the interest of the buyer who in this case happened to be the daughter of the proprietor. After several failures he decided to adopt different tactics. The next time he visited the store he approached her hurriedly and, with a smile, said:

"Sorry, I have to catch a train in a few minutes and haven't time to show you a special sample I have with me. I will surely come in and see you again on my next trip and I want you to keep this to remember me by," and he handed her a small souvenir powder-puff. On his next trip he again approached the buyer in the same way saying: "Too bad, I brought something special to offer you on this trip but I have positively to catch the 6:15 to Portland and it's only ten minutes to train time. I'll surely give you plenty of time on my next trip."

The salesman took it as a matter of course that the buyer was perfectly willing to inspect his samples and by this time the young lady began to reveal curiosity. When he visited

her the third time he had no difficulty in securing permission to show his samples. Her interest had been aroused.

§ 72. The Flank Approach

It is sad to confess but the fact must be acknowledged that a certain offer to some customers may be very much like a red rag to a bull. The mere mention of the salesman's business is sufficient to cause such an expression of blank vacuity to overspread the face of the prospect that it subdues the courage of all but the most experienced and pertinacious of salesmen. When approaching a customer who is known to be slightly antagonistic it may be diplomatic to advance from the flank as it were, rather than from the front.

Most men are more or less indifferent and some even antagonistic to the appeal of the life insurance salesman. Furthermore, when a man buys life insurance he as a rule prefers to do so from somebody he knows and in whom he has confidence. For this reason many insurance salesmen ask their clients to give them the names of friends with the intention of calling on them. But before mentioning business they frequently make an effort to become acquainted with the prospect and if they succeed the conversation is limited to everyday affairs. Only after they have met casually in this way on several occasions does the life insurance salesman broach the topic in which he is primarily interested.

§ 73. Variations of Flank Approach

A variation of a flank approach is used by an insurance salesman. When calling on prospects with whom he is unacquainted and when he has not even the name of a mutual friend to use as an introduction, he introduces the subject of *fire* insurance instead of *life* insurance. Fire insurance is a necessity universally recognized. It entails much less drastic expenditure than life insurance and consequently it is broached

to more tolerant ears. When the salesman finds that the prospect has already protected his property by fire insurance, as is usually the case, he congratulates him on his judgment in choosing such a good company no matter what this may be and then swings the conversation around to life insurance. This flank approach is frequently much more effective than to approach the subject directly.

The flank approach can be made in a variety of ways. A druggist in a rural community for a long time tried ineffectually to interest the farmers in the outlying country in his veterinary medicines. He equipped an automobile and sent out a salesman with samples, necessary supplies, and instructions to do only a cash trade. The salesman found that he had to face severe competition from so-called "medicine wagons." These made a practice of leaving medicines with the farmer without asking for payment until used and approved. As a result their hold on the business was so strong that he was unable to break in. A consultation followed between the druggist and his salesman and a new method of approach was devised.

On his next trip the salesman carried with him a number of talking machines, sporting goods, chinaware, and other objects of special interest to the farmer and his family. He then explained to his prospects that by saving the coupons given with all goods purchased at the drug store any of these premiums could quickly be secured. Double value in coupons would be given for every cash purchase of a veterinary medicine. In this way interest was readily secured, sales followed, and the druggist adhered to his policy of doing a strictly cash business.

§ 74. Do Not Make It Easy to Say "No"

No salesman worth his salt will make the mistake of approaching a likely customer with a negative question such as:

"You can't use so and so, can you?" The natural answer to such a query is "No." The question, however, need not be put in the negative to invite a negative answer and thereby a refusal of the offer.

For example, "Do you need this?" or "Do you need that?" are phrases frequently heard in retail stores. The obvious answer to such queries as these is "No," and the salesman loses a chance to introduce an additional sale. For instance, a salesman who has just sold some silverware might ask: "Have you any silver polish?"; but it would be better still to say: "Our Peerless Silver Polish will preserve the luster of this article indefinitely" or some similar statement. Then whether the answer of the customer is "Yes" or "No" or "I don't know" the salesman can still proceed to introduce his line.

"Can I interest you in the purchase of some aluminum ware?" and "Can I interest you in this set of books?" are openings which invariably receive and deserve a negative reply. "Our new line of aluminum ware you will find the easiest thing to clean and keep bright in your whole kitchen." "This splendid set of books contains all the information any child needs to carry him to the eighth grade." "These cards match the envelope and writing paper perfectly." These are all forms of definite statement to be preferred to the phrases which invite a rejection.

§ 75. Summary

Whatever the nature of the salesman's offer may be, he should prepare and memorize several different methods of approach and study and rehearse the presentation of his goods. No cut-and-dried method will fit the needs of all cases. To attract attention and arouse interest it is important that the opening sentence should dwell upon and emphasize the prospect's interests rather than those of the salesman.

Only when the salesman is sure that the customer is interested in what he has to say should he strive to make those points in which he himself is particularly interested as a vendor of the goods. A prospect must first be interested in the proposition as a whole before its details are explained to him.

CHAPTER VII

INTERESTING THE RETAIL CUSTOMER

§ 76. The Problem of the Retail Salesperson

Retail salespersons are not faced with the same problem as salesmen on the road and therefore do not need the same completeness of preparation in the construction of sales arguments. Yet they need to study means and methods of arousing interest in the wares they handle. It is true that the majority of shoppers enter the store with preconceived ideas as to what they want. But their attention can frequently be drawn to goods other than those requested; sometimes it may be desirable to call attention to another brand of better value than the one asked for; means must be studied for fixing the wandering attention of those who are merely looking around; and finally the art of displaying and describing goods must be practiced with the object of strengthening the appeal.

§ 77. The Attitude of the Salesperson Must Be Positive

To win and increase this interest the salesperson should be positive and enthusiastic when describing the merchandise. The general attitude of employees in many retail stores is negative or passive. The article asked for is procured; it is apathetically placed on the counter; and little or no attempt is made either to help the customer to a final decision, if choice enters into the transaction, or to sell something in addition to the original purchase. The clerk's presumption is that the shopper, especially if he is a man, knows his own mind and that to seek to influence him in any way may be to court his displeasure, if not a rebuff.

It is, however, wholly unnecessary to importune a cus-

tomer to buy. A higher-priced article or additional merchandise will often be bought if the salesperson reveals a little enterprise. The fact that customers want to look at certain goods or are in the store making a tour of inspection, implies a willingness to be interested if any special merchandise is brought to their attention. The tactful salesperson presumes that they will be glad to hear about the qualities or special feature of any goods they may be inspecting.

§ 78. Methods of Interesting the Shopper

Suppose, for instance, a man has just bought some shirts in a men's furnishing store and while waiting for the parcel looks with interest at a display of ties suspended on a rack. It is then quite permissible to pick up the end of one and say, "This is pure silk—it will retain its luster." As the customer's gaze is transferred to another style the remark may be made, "This is made of a new material which does not wrinkle easily like the ordinary tie." The action can then be suited to the word by squeezing the end of the tie in the fingers and showing that little or no impression is left upon the silk. When hats are under inspection the remark might be, "The shade of this hat is unusually smart and would go particularly well with the suit you are wearing"; or when trying on a suit, "This is the new close-fitting style which is now so fashionable. Note also the finish to the lining of this coat, ..." and remarks to this effect.

Positive statements of this nature which are comments on style, quality, and value may be made in the course of every retail sale. If in addition some interesting facts can be mentioned about the material or about the purchase itself, if it happens to be a particularly good "buy," so much the better. These remarks direct attention to the good points of an article and tend to keep the mind from dwelling upon and exaggerating the less attractive features.

Consider, for example, the sale of a lady's suit. Should little or nothing be said about the good features of the wearing apparel, the customer's first thought might be that she did not like the belt attached to it or that it was not exactly the shade of color she wanted or any one of half a dozen objections to the particular garment might come to mind. It must be remembered that customers are invariably looking for defects and seeking to criticize. Positive remarks help to direct the thought to the attractive features of the purchase. The sale is not necessarily lost if that particular coat is not bought; but the more skilfully the customer's requirements can be gauged and the desirability of the article that is being tried on accentuated, the sooner is she satisfied. The skill and efficiency of the saleswoman are revealed by her ability to satisfy customers quickly. As the number of persons whom she serves during the day increases, the lower becomes the percentage of her selling cost.

§ 79. Selling Something Other Than the Article Asked For

The retail salesperson should seek every opportunity to suggest tactfully one or more additional purchases. If the store does not stock the particular thing desired, the obvious course is to suggest something else. The management may wish, moreover, to close out a certain line of goods; or an exceptionally advantageous purchase may have been made of something which can be sold to the advantage of both the store and the customer. All these are reasons for suggesting the purchase of something in addition to the thing asked for.

§ 80. Superiority Should Not Be Claimed Without Proof

When a brand asked for cannot be supplied and a substitute must be proffered, no claim for superiority should be made unless this is in some way upheld. For instance, a customer in a drug store asks for a certain cough syrup.

The store does not keep it but the salesman without a word brings out a medicine which resembles it in its ingredients and price. "I am sorry we haven't the particular syrup you want," he says, "but I can give you this Cherry Cough Syrup which we think is even better because . . .," and here he gives the reasons why.

When it can truthfully be affirmed that the article offered is better than the one asked for, reasons for the superiority should be given; otherwise no comparison should be made. Nothing arouses mistrust or incredulity more rapidly than comparative and superlative assertions which are unaccompanied by any proof. Nothing is more convincing than a claim of superiority when supported by definite reasons which appeal to common sense and experience.

As an example, a customer asks for a cigar which is not kept in stock. The salesman immediately hands out another brand sold at the same price and of about the same strength and size: "We do not keep that cigar," he says, "but this one which is the same price and the same strength is in our opinion a smoother smoking cigar. We stock it in preference to the other because, having opened both cigars and compared them, we find the filler of this to be of a much more even grade of tobacco." Or, if the salesman cannot substantiate what he says, he might reply, "I am sorry, we do not have that cigar; but if you try this it is very much like the one you ask for and is the same size and price."

When offering an alternative choice it is desirable not to use the phrase "This is just as good." These words are the stock formula of the dealer who practices substitution for his own profit and for this reason are to be avoided.

§ 81. Selling Another Brand Without Substitution

When it is the sales policy of the store to introduce a new brand or to sell an unadvertised article in preference to one

that is advertised, the substitution should be made openly and above board. The new product ought to be sold on its merits with a suggestion, if the customer adheres to the first choice, that both brands be tried side by side.

For example, a drug store wishes to push its own brand of cough syrup. A customer asks for another make. While wrapping up the one called for the salesman may say, "Have you tried this cough syrup before?" If the customer replies in the affirmative this affords an opportunity to suggest a trial of the store's own remedy because all coughs are not alike. If the customer's answer is that he has never tried the syrup and is doing so on the recommendation of somebody else, the sales talk might be: "Sometimes coughs are very difficult to cure. If you find that this bottle fails in its effect, as coughs are not all alike and require different medicines, we'd be glad to have you try our brand of so and so." The salesman then gives further reasons why the substitute should be tried.

A customer in a grocery asks for a certain brand of canned corn. As the salesman procures it and places it before her, if the purchaser is a regular customer, he remarks, "We have a new brand called the American which we feel we can recommend in every way. I would like to have you try it and let us have your opinion."

These methods of introducing different articles inspire confidence in the salesman's knowledge and ability and make it comparatively easy for him to effect the substitution he desires—either at the present time or when the next purchase is made. The evident willingness to supply the thing requested removes any suspicion as to the motive in suggesting the change. Under no circumstances should the desirability of purchasing a substitute be mentioned until the article first requested has been placed in front of the customer—otherwise the natural thought is that the salesman is seeking to

sell something from a motive of self-interest. Distrust is then at once aroused.

§ 82. The Customer Who is "Just Looking Around"

In every big department store and in many of secondary size customers like to look around merely for the pleasure of gazing upon the pretty things displayed. If they discover something which seems a particular bargain or is suitable as a gift they may buy it. In many cases the main object is to while away a few idle hours.

When the salesman approaches a customer who signifies that she does not care to be shown anything and that she simply wishes to look around, he should discreetly withdraw—still keeping his eyes upon her while she is in his department. The customer must not know that she is being watched or that the salesman is waiting for an opportunity to approach her if she inspects or reveals any interest in a particular article, otherwise she will either leave the store or refrain from showing interest in anything.

When, however, a lengthy pause before a particular display indicates that her attention has been definitely attracted the salesman can then approach her with the object of serving her in some way. Her interest has now been awakened and the salesman's task is to strengthen this interest.

If, for instance, she is examining a show case containing hand-bags he would, of course, not say, "Do you want a hand-bag, Madam?" as the probable reply would be "No" and the customer would leave the store feeling that she had been unduly pressed to buy. He might, however, tactfully comment upon the hand-bags in this way: "You will be interested to know, Madam, that these are the new 'sack' designs which are so popular just now. They arrived only yesterday." Positive remarks such as these about the goods either strengthen the interest which the customer shows when she

pauses to inspect a particular article; or if she has little interest in the thing she is inspecting, a positive remark of this nature may induce her either to examine it more closely or to mention something else she is seeking.

§ 83. Avoid Asking Many Questions

Having considered a few of the things salesmen must do to increase the interest of the retail shopper in things he has to offer, let us now consider a few little things he must not do if he is to avoid nipping this interest in the bud.

Many people object to any questions at the beginning of a sale and they rely on the salesperson's judgment to a much greater extent than is realized. When asked a number of questions the natural thought of the buyer is that the salesperson does not understand what is wanted and therefore cannot be of much help in making a choice. Especially is this so in the case of the woman shopper. This feeling naturally destroys her confidence in the salesman's ability and to this extent injures the possibility of making a sale.

Imagine, for instance, what would be the effect on a customer buying a pair of gloves if she were asked the following questions:

Query: Do you want them long or short?

Answer: Short.

Query: What kind of gloves do you want?

Answer: Kid.

Query: What color do you want?

Answer: Gray.

Query: What size do you want?

Answer: Six.

And so on.

The crudity of asking questions is thus seen. Yet many retail salesmen request information of this kind before they

turn to their shelves and stock in search of the desired article. After several queries the impatient or nervous type of retail customer is very likely to reply, "Never mind, I don't think I will bother about them today," and to leave the store in search of more intelligent service.

The salesman must remember that customers do not always know exactly what they want. A woman may need a pair of gloves without having definitely made up her mind as to the kind, the quality, or the color. She simply knows that she wants a pair and wishes to see what the store has to offer before making a choice. Even if she has decided upon a particular color and style she may like to inspect others so as to see if there is anything she likes better.

A safe rule is that not more than one, or on special occasions perhaps two questions shall be asked at the opening of a sale. For example, if a garment is being bought the question may be, "Have you any preference as to color?"—or a similar query in order to give the salesman a lead as to the customer's taste. Never should the query be put, "What price do you want to pay?" And this leads to the discussion of another of the little "don'ts."

§ 84. Avoid Mentioning Prices

Every flourishing business, big or little, is built upon satisfaction and the repeat orders which follow. The object of the retail salesman is to sell goods which are not only pleasing to the eye but which will prove equally satisfactory in use. The aim of the shopper is usually to get the biggest value for money. Sometimes the customer determines before entering a store not to spend more than a certain sum regardless of whether or not good value can be obtained for the price. Consequently it is always poor diplomacy for the salesman to ask his customer to name a price if he or she does not broach the subject. When price is not mentioned the pre-

sumption is that quality is desired, quality being reflected in the thing giving satisfaction in wear or in the superiority of its appearance. The salesman's aim is to sell what he thinks is the best quality of goods that the customer can afford.

Many a customer thinks the price of an article high as he or she leaves the store; but when the well-made good-quality article is put to the test of daily wear, price is forgotten in the satisfaction afforded by quality and appearance. Only the satisfied customer returns with a repeat order. So long as there is a reasonable certainty that customers will remain satisfied with their purchases after they leave, it is immaterial whether the price be more or less than the purchaser expected to pay. To ask what priced goods to display frequently makes it impossible to sell quality wares.

For example, a customer comes into a store with the intention of paying \$20 for a suit of clothes and he is shown one valued at \$22 and another at \$25; or a man intends to buy a cheap pocket-knife costing 50 cents and he is offered one worth a dollar. When the query is raised as to the price he wishes to pay he probably names the minimum figure at which he hopes to buy what he needs. When once the cheaper figure is mentioned something at that price must be shown and the opportunity of selling something of better quality at the *maximum* price is lost. Incidentally customers do not always know exactly what the thing they need is worth and what price they should pay. A man may have an indefinite idea of spending \$20 for a suit of clothes and yet be perfectly willing to pay \$30 if he is offered something that especially pleases him.

§ 85. Finding the Price Limit

To choose goods suitable for the customer's pocket is a matter of judgment. A suit of clothes, for example, may

range from \$15 to \$100; pocket-knives sell from 25 cents to \$5 each. It is natural to size up the customer and estimate what he can afford to pay for the article in question if the purchase is for anything more than a trifling amount. He is then shown something a little higher in price than he would normally ask for.

When it is impossible to gauge with any accuracy how much a customer expects to pay, the figure can be ascertained approximately by showing goods at several prices. The advantage of doing this is that it permits values to be contrasted and thus arouses interest in the value of the higher-priced goods. The customer's manner will indicate when the price limit has been reached.

Salespeople who study their goods and are acquainted with their selling points will frequently be able to sell goods higher in price than those called for. To do this they must display a variety of articles, explain their merits, and seek by means of demonstration and descriptive sales talk to sell that which will give the most satisfaction even if the price is higher than the customer expects to pay.

§ 86. Show the Largest Sized Packages

For the same reason that goods of the best quality are always shown to a suitable customer, when a product is sold in different sized packages the large size should be offered when no price is mentioned. These larger sizes invariably represent better value and in some cases offer an economy of as much as 50 per cent. Often a customer does not know in what sizes an article is packed; in this case if a query is put as to the quantity desired the smaller package may be chosen where otherwise the sale of a large one can be made. When a small-sized package is asked for this should promptly be placed before the customer after which the fact can be mentioned that a larger package costing so much represents

much better value and is a real economy in the end. This discussion of the size of the package leads to another little "don't" relating to sizes.

§ 87. Avoid Telling Size

In selling shoes, gloves, or other articles of wear which are fitted to the customer, so far as possible all questions relating to the size should be avoided. Many women shoppers have peculiar ideas about sizes, especially those of shoes and gloves, and will insist upon buying a certain size, if it is once specified, regardless of fit and comfort. Many men forget the size worn and do not want to be worried with such a detail. By measuring the hand or the foot, in preference to asking what size is desired, unnecessary discussion is avoided. Incidentally such a method gives the customer more confidence in the ability of the salesperson.

§ 88. The General Attitude of the Retail Salesperson

The attitude of many retail salespeople toward their customers is apathetic and indifferent. They lack enthusiasm in their work and this lack, as we shall see in later chapters, is largely due to ignorance of the attractive features of their goods. They do not study their merchandise from the viewpoint of describing it in terms which will appeal. As they are not interested in its finer points they cannot hope to arouse much interest in the mind of the shopper. Before we can interest others we must reveal intense interest ourselves. When this interest is really earnest and sincere it shows itself as enthusiasm. The enthusiastic conviction of the salesperson can transform apathetic interest in a particular article into the desire to buy.

CHAPTER VIII

VIVIDNESS OF MENTAL IMPRESSIONS

§ 89. Sales Argument Must Be Clear and Definite

Two salesmen representing rival furniture manufacturers called the same day upon the same customer. Both offered well-made goods of similar style, quality, and price and both houses enjoyed high reputations in the trade. There was little to choose between the two lines; yet one salesman secured a big order while the other left empty-handed.

When the buyer was asked why he had given all his business to the one and nothing to the other, his answer was:

"I should have liked to have split the order but as a matter of fact one salesman was so indifferent and lazy in describing his furniture and failed to answer so many of my questions clearly that I didn't care to take a chance with him. I couldn't get a clear idea of the exact nature of his offer and what his terms really were. The man who got my order knew what he had, was definite about his terms, and he told me what I could expect in such a way that I knew what I was buying for my money."

The salesman who failed lacked the ability to explain his proposition. No buyer will spend money for something he only vaguely understands. When he receives a blurred mental impression this can be due only to a lack of orderliness in the mind of the salesman. The latter fails to appreciate the importance of preparing and memorizing a definite, clear-cut statement. Without preliminary preparation he cannot make a vivid impression upon the prospect. Because he himself understands his proposition in every detail he thinks that

a more or less perfunctory explanation will make it equally clear to the buyer. Yet many people lack sufficient imagination to picture vividly anything which is not outlined to them in every detail.

§ 90. Details of Argument Must be Logically Arranged

Progress along the stages of the mental journey from attention to action is possible only when the sales talk conveys a clear impression of what the goods or the service will do. Clarity is first of all dependent on the careful preparatory grouping of like details under the talking point to which they belong. Without this preparation the sales talk is sure to ramble vaguely from one point to another. One cannot convey to the mind of another more than is in one's own. If the salesman has merely memorized a hodgepodge of facts about his proposition he cannot hope to produce a clear and satisfactory impression upon the mind of the buyer.

In addition to clarity and logical order in the presentation of the facts, attention must also be given to vividness, so that the statements made will impress the imagination and remain in the memory. To make the appeal clear and vivid three things should be borne in mind in the construction of the sales arguments:

1. Definiteness of statement
2. Use of similes and metaphors
3. Reasoning by analogy

§ 91. Definiteness of Statement

The average mind does not grasp an abstract or general statement so readily as a definite statement of concrete facts. For example, the assertion, "This book is very useful," is vague and indefinite. Compare it with this more definite assertion: "This encyclopedia will give you complete information upon almost any subject." The first statement is

abstract; it is general; it presents no concrete idea. The second is more definite and lucid; it conveys easily understood facts. It becomes still more definite when the following details are added: "This encyclopedia will give you complete information about history, law, natural science, lives of great men, all the arts, and any other subject you wish to study."

A general or indefinite statement weakens the argument unless it is at once nailed down with a concrete example. The cash register salesman says to the dealer: "You have leaks in your business." He then promptly adds in order to drive home this general statement: "through failure to charge goods sold on credit, through waste of supplies, through errors in figuring. . . ." The retailer might contend that his business was too efficiently managed to permit serious leakages without detection, when leakage is considered in general; he cannot deny that any one of the particular leaks referred to may be occurring daily in his store.

A motor truck salesman may make the statement, "With these trucks you can increase your field of operations." A much more effective assertion would be, "By using three of our motor trucks you can cover a twenty-mile radius where you now cover only twelve. You can take in White Field, Hillsdale, Lock Port, and twenty other towns at that distance and increase your probable customers by several thousand." The second statement creates a definite mental picture; the first leaves to the imagination the task of visualizing the usefulness of a motor truck.

A salesman selling bond paper may make the assertion, which doubtless is perfectly true, "Our bond paper is of a very fine quality indeed and is as good as anything that is made"; but he would create a much more vivid impression by asserting, "Bond paper is impressive for business stationery. It is tough, heavy in appearance, and conveys an im-

pression of solidity." In this way a general statement is illustrated with concrete facts.

§ 92. Use of Similes and Metaphors

Definiteness of statement tends to check and curb exaggeration and to pin the assertion of the salesman down to facts. The use of similes or metaphors so visualizes these facts that they take concrete and tangible form in the buyer's mind. A simile is a form of comparison which likens a little known thing to something more readily visualized. A metaphor is a similar mode of comparison but without any explicit statement of the relationship. Consequently it usually takes the form of a figure of speech and the comparison instead of being direct is indirect.

The statement that "White's Cream Bread melts like butter in the mouth" is a direct comparison, a simile. The statement that "the enterprising head of White's Bakery is the Napoleon of the bread business" would be a metaphor. An insurance salesman when discussing the danger of death overtaking a customer at any time does not care to use this lugubrious word. He avoids reference to it by the use of the metaphorical phrase "the long arm of the gentleman with the scythe is apt to come for you at any time."

The effectiveness of similes and metaphors lies in the fact that they connect the new and untested assertion with ideas already familiar to the prospect. From this it follows that the more the salesman can link his talk or his argument with similes and metaphors that are based on the customer's surroundings or on the conditions under which he is carrying on business, the more convincing will be his sales talk.

§ 93. The Construction of Similes and Metaphors

The use of similes presents little difficulty as everything can readily be compared with something else. Nor is it essen-

tial that the comparison be striking and original. The statement that something will melt like butter in the mouth may be a hackneyed and trite expression but it still holds up a very definite picture to the mind, because everybody knows just how butter does melt when in that particular position. A salesman offering a book of adventure to a customer might say that "It's just as thrilling as *Treasure Island*." A story that is as exciting as *Treasure Island* must be very exciting indeed if one remembers the thrill experienced in reading Robert Louis Stevenson's masterpiece.

The use of metaphor is rather more difficult than the use of similes as the analogy is not so obvious. When a cleverly conceived metaphor relates to something which is well known to the customer or falls within his experience it is the strongest of all arguments. Metaphor can often be effectively used to show the weakness of the unreasoned objection by turning it into mild ridicule—as in the incident described below, which also illustrates reasoning by analogy.

§ 94. Reasoning by Analogy

A grocer had decided to buy a cash register but could not make up his mind as to the particular style of machine to purchase. The cash register salesman believed that it would be to the retailer's advantage to invest in a \$600 machine. The retailer thought that a \$200 outfit would meet his requirements. The higher-priced machine offered much more protection and information than the smaller one; but to have stated the fact baldly would not have carried conviction or made a vivid impression. The salesman knew this and so he made his point in this way:

"Suppose, Mr. Brown, that you had a cabbage patch and just outside this patch were a lot of pigs and sheep and cows that were running over it and spoiling it. A two-foot fence would keep out the pigs and still the sheep and the cows

could easily climb over. A four-foot fence would exclude the pigs and sheep and still leave the cows free to get in. A six-foot fence would keep them all out. Now what you want is a six-foot cash register to keep out all chance of any errors creeping in. Why not protect yourself against even the exceptional mistakes which arise in every store where the book-keeping is entrusted to human hands and unreliable memory instead of to a reliable machine?"

This illustration makes clear the value of metaphor and also the forcefulness of reasoning by analogy. In this case the analogy was so plain as to convince the prospect that the contemplated purchase of the low-priced register would be a waste of money when the real needs of his store were considered. But this decided change in mental attitude would not have taken place if the salesman had merely said, "This more expensive outfit is what you need because it will give you greater protection and better results."

§ 95. Comparative Statements Strengthened by Analogy

Reasoning by analogy is argument based on the similarity of relations between different things and is always an effective method of supporting an assertion or claim that is hard to prove.

For example, a prospect who was skeptical as to the standing of a certain business said to its representative: "Well, who is your firm anyway?"

"Our firm is rapidly growing and now employs over a thousand workmen. It . . ."

"If it is as large as you state why have I never heard of it?" interrupted the prospect.

"Well, that's not very strange," replied the salesman. "Have you ever heard of Bell and Company or the Stockholm Manufacturing Company or the Hotchkiss Company?"

"No," replied the prospect.

"Yet these are the largest concerns of their kind in the country and we come a close second. So it is not very surprising that you have never heard of us."

To have met the question of the prospect with a reiteration of his first assertion or to have ignored it would have left the buyer still skeptical as to the standing of the firm he was asked to deal with. To prove to him by analogy that if he had never heard of the most important houses in the trade it was not surprising for him to be unacquainted with the firm running a close second was an effective method of answering his doubts and objection.

§ 96. The Usefulness of Analogy in Combating Illogical Arguments

A salesman selling an adding machine was told by a prospective purchaser that a friend of the latter who used such a device found it unsatisfactory, because at the end of the day the figures which it added and which were taken from sales slips frequently failed to balance with the cash. This of course was a foolish objection because the discrepancy must in all probability have been due to errors on the part of the clerks. An adding machine in proper working order cannot make mistakes.

To point out the weakness not to say folly of this argument the salesman replied, "A teacher on leaving the classroom for a few minutes once placed one of the boys at the head of the class with orders to report any breaking of the rules. When she returned the boy reported three of the pupils who had misbehaved, whereupon the teacher gave him a whipping for 'telling on' his classmates."

The value of reasoning in this way is that it enables the salesman to show up the weakness of many of the trivial objections that are made to his offer. The same stereotyped objections confront him again and again but with a little

mental ingenuity he can prepare effective answers. If he can illustrate the weakness of the objection by means of analogy in the way cited, so much the better. Every prospect resents contradiction or mere dogmatic assertion. But every intelligent man is willing to acknowledge his judgment or his opinion to have been erroneous if his error is pointed out to him in an indirect and, preferably, humorous way.

§ 97. Suggestions for Strengthening the Sales Argument

The more the argument is illumined or clarified in the way outlined in this chapter the more vivid and convincing it will be as a whole. In order to profit from the suggestions here given the salesman is advised to elaborate each talking point into a complete argument as described in Chapter IV. He can then go over each argument in detail, first, in order to group the different details under the head or talking point to which they naturally refer; second, to see which general or indefinite statements can be made more specific and definite; third, to note what statements are comparative in their nature and can therefore be strengthened by the use of simile; and finally, to search for ways of strengthening each argument or talking point by the use of analogy or a metaphorical story.

To the novice unversed in the art of composition this may seem a difficult task. It is not to be done in a day or a week. If, however, the salesman will constantly bear in mind the possibility of improving his sales talk in the way suggested until it scintillates and sparkles with the brain work put into it, many ideas will occur to him during his leisure moments when he is turning the subject over in his mind. The more he concentrates on it, the more ideas for its improvement will come to mind. The final result will be a clear, convincing, original sales talk which will be listened to with interest and will carry conviction to the apathetic or antagonistic mind.

CHAPTER IX

WINNING THE INTERVIEW

§ 98. To Break In Is Often Half the Battle

A keen young salesman carefully trained himself in the art of demonstrating his goods; he committed every conceivable talking point to memory; the old hands at the game taught him how to answer all likely objections with apt and telling replies—until he knew what to say and do under every conceivable circumstance. Finally he was sent out on the road to interview heads of large corporations who usually had to be reached through a clerk at the information desk.

He started on his round brimful of enthusiasm. He returned in less than a month with all his “pep” gone and without an order. When asked to explain the cause of his failure his answer was, “I knew just what to do when I met the prospect. The trouble was I never got near him.”

A salesman may study his goods and his market, memorize his talking points, assemble them into two or three complete sales talks, and be primed to meet every conceivable objection; yet if he is held at arm’s length and can only occasionally break through the outer defenses of his prospects his value as a producer will be small.

§ 99. One Definite Rule You Can Always Apply

There is no sure method of breaking into the buyer’s presence. There is, however, one rule which every salesman can safely adopt at all times: Never be discouraged when you are refused an interview but try, try again. The very persistence of your calling will in time at least create respect and in nine cases out of ten break down opposition.

Buyers often judge the mettle of a new salesman largely by his persistence in calling regularly in spite of rebuffs. The man who turns up again and again in the face of previous "turn downs," always with the same smile and always with the expectancy that to grant him an interview is the most natural thing in the world, will be sure to win this interview in the end.

§ 100. Reasons Why the Buyer Refuses an Interview

It should be remembered that the prospective customer's refusal of an interview may come from any of several reasons which may not exist at the salesman's next visit. Possibly the buyer decides that the goods are of no immediate interest and that an interview will be a waste of time. Again, his relations with a firm which at present supplies him may be such as he does not wish to break off. When the salesman again calls the former harmonious relationship may no longer exist and a chance for an opening arises.

The refusal may not be due to business but to purely personal reasons. Perhaps the buyer feels unwell or worried—or he may be anxious to leave the office early to meet his wife—or any of a score of reasons may keep him from granting an interview at the time of the salesman's call. Whatever the reason the refusal is usually in the form of a stereotyped excuse to the effect that "Mr. Brown is too busy to see you today," or, "Mr. Brown says there is nothing wanted on this trip."

It will thus be seen that when no indication is given of the reason for refusal the presumption is that another call may prove more effective

§ 101. When to Force an Interview

Every refusal to grant an interview creates a situation that needs to be handled according to the circumstances of the case.

Where the salesman represents a wholesale house and knows that he will be making the same trip several times during the course of a year, the better policy may be to leave his card if the buyer will not see him. As he leaves the office he says to the information clerk or telephone operator, "I am sorry Mr. Jones cannot see me today. I will call on my next round when I hope to find he has more time to spare."

In such a case pertinacity and regularity in calling—always with the same cheerful smile—will in time break down the opposition of any buyer who has no personal grudge against the salesman or his house.

The specialty salesman can usually call again only after a long interval. If his work is to be productive and pay for the heavy cost of personal solicitation he must gain the ear of a certain number of customers daily. To serve the purpose of an entering wedge advertising literature or a series of form letters will probably have been sent ahead of him with the object of interesting the prospective customer sufficiently to make him willing to grant an interview. A refusal after this preliminary approach would imply that he is still not interested and other tactics must be adopted.

In some cases ingenuity may be needed or a little audacity in forcing an interview may be recommended. It is advisable, however, never to try to force one's presence on a customer until he has been called upon several times without avail, or unless correspondence has preceded the call.

§ 102. Polite Insistence Always Worth a Trial

Sometimes a happy way of insisting upon an interview may prove effective and is always worth a trial.

A salesman selling a specialty in the mechanical field made a special trip to a large automobile factory near Detroit. A pleasant young woman at the information desk sent forward his card to the general manager whom he particularly wished

to see. A messenger returned with the words scribbled on the back of the card: "Too busy to see you today—Directors' Meeting."

"How long does this meeting last?" he asked the girl.

"About two hours."

"I'll wait until it is over and then perhaps the general manager will see me."

"It's useless," she replied. "He will be much too busy and he always refuses to see anybody after a directors' meeting. Did you arrange an appointment?"

"No," replied the salesman.

"Then I'd advise you to do so and call again."

The salesman paused to reflect as he approached the steps leading from the main office. After a few moments he returned to the information desk. Taking out another card he wrote on the back of it:

"I merely want to shake you by the hand and look you in the eye so that next year when I call again and you have more time you will know what I look like."

He asked the girl to send this message in to the general manager. The card returned with the answer, "Will see you at four this afternoon." The two hours interval the salesman filled in with a stroll through the town until he finally secured the coveted interview.

§ 103. When to Avoid Mentioning Nature of Business

Sometimes the better policy is not to announce the name of the firm represented or the nature of its business. This is especially applicable to the sale of certain specialties in which the prospect thinks he is not interested. In such a case it may be necessary to gain admittance by pertinacious insistence without stating the nature of the business until face to face with the buyer.

For instance, when a cash register salesman enters a store

he walks up to the person whom he judges to be the store-keeper and says, "Is this Mr. Johnson?" If the person addressed proves to be a clerk he is flattered at being mistaken for the proprietor. If he is a clerk and replies, "Mr. Johnson is busy," the salesman answers, "Very well, I will wait a few minutes until he is at liberty." If the proprietor is out, "Very well, I will call again. When is he likely to be in?"

When the clerk asks, "What is your business? What do you want to see him about?" the salesman replies, "I want to see Mr. Johnson personally. I will wait until I can see him." If the clerk is insistent or reveals annoyance at the secrecy, the salesman answers, "My name is Smith. Will you please tell Mr. Johnson that Mr. Smith wishes to see him and explain his business to him personally."

When the salesman finally comes face to face with the proprietor, if he is asked to explain his business, he openly states the reason for his call—"I represent the —— Cash Register Company." This opening puts the salesman on a square footing. If the prospect has any objection to granting an interview or any reasons for refusing to listen to the salesman's talk about cash registers his fire is drawn at once.

§ 104. Ask for an Interview with a Definite Person

As a rule it is an advantage when seeking an interview to be able to ask to see Mr. So-and-so rather than an indefinite person such as the buyer, the manager, or the merchandise man.

A salesman handling office appliances found that whenever he asked if the "buyer of supplies" was in he nearly always met with a request for his card or was asked to state his business. He finally concluded that the very fact of asking for "the buyer" hurt his chances of winning an interview.

He decided that it would be better to find out the buyer's name and then introduce himself in such a way as to convey

the impression that he was expected. On some occasions he was able to ascertain the buyer's name in advance but more often he entered the office of a prospect without this information. To conceal his ignorance his method was—"I want to see Mr. —, Mr. —, Dear me, I can't recall his name! Who is the buyer of office supplies?"

The girl at the information desk generally replied, "Is it Mr. — you mean?" to which the salesman answered "Yes." That's the man I want. Please tell him that Mr. Blank is here. A card is unnecessary." The girl would then either telephone to the buyer or send in a message to the effect that "Mr. Blank has called, sir." The buyer wondering who Mr. Blank was and if he had an appointment with him would in some cases see the salesman so as to be on the safe side.

§ 105. Ask for an Interview as if Expected

The winning of an interview as in the example already cited is much easier if one approaches with the attitude of expecting to receive it. When we doubt whether a favor will be granted we invite a refusal; but if we treat it as a matter of course we are much more likely to receive it. It is obvious that when a salesman calls and asks if the buyer or the manager is in he does not know the name of the person he wants to see. A question such as this exposes his business and his ignorance. The information clerk goes to the buyer and says:

"There's a salesman who wants to see you, sir."

"Tell him I'm busy," is a frequent reply before the prospect even looks at the card.

The salesman should fortify his persistence by reflecting that three-quarters of all business is transacted by means of salesmen and that it is all in the day's routine for wholesale buyers, purchasing agents, and retailers to refuse at times to grant an interview. A prerogative of the salesman is to be

persistent when he believes he has something of interest and profit to show to the buyer.

§ 106. The Adroit Use of Samples

Samples can sometimes be used as a means of gaining an interview when the direct approach fails. The wholesale salesman who wishes to display his samples and is not given an opportunity to do so often feels that if only the buyer could be shown the new lines, business would be secured in spite of a previous reluctance to look at them.

Among the customers of a wholesale millinery house were several department store buyers who were usually inaccessible if the salesman chanced to call while they were in their offices. Not infrequently the word came back that "nothing was wanted on this trip" or "I'm too busy." It is true the salesman might have sent up a second message to an inaccessible buyer saying that he wished to show a few special lines and that he wanted to see him for a few minutes only, but experience proved that the chance of thus winning an interview was slender. Finally as the best way out of the difficulty he adopted the following plan:

When he returned to his hotel late in the afternoon he selected a few "specials" which he thought would prove most tempting in their appeal to the two or three most important buyers who had refused to see him. He sent these by special messenger to the offices of the buyers with a note worded as follows:

"Sorry you were so busy when I called today. To save your time I am sending by special messenger a few samples of my novelties which I feel I ought to show you before leaving town. Look them over at your leisure between now and ten o'clock tomorrow morning. I will be at the store about that time. Don't want to leave town without shaking hands with you at any rate."

No plan is ever uniformly successful, but persistence in trying different means will secure many interviews that otherwise would never be granted. Every wholesale salesman carries among his samples two or three attractive leaders to be used in securing an opening, or else he knows which items in his line will most please the fancy of a particular buyer. The use of these in the way outlined will often be found effective when everything else has failed. The buyer naturally looks over the samples and, whether interested or not, at least feels under the obligation of thanking the salesman for the trouble he has taken—if only to “shake hands.”

§ 107. Heroic Methods Sometimes Needed

The more difficult an article is to sell, such as a service or a high-priced specialty, the greater as a rule will be the obstacles encountered when breaking through the outer barricades with which many business men and buyers protect themselves from the insistent salesman. The more heroic, accordingly, must be the means adopted to get an interview. The result, however, must justify the salesman's persistence. An interview gained by means of insistence, or by means of “nerve,” would be worse than useless if, when it opens, the salesman is unable to take complete command of the situation.

A salesman representing an advertising novelty house which was as yet unknown, knew that if he could once secure the ear of certain prospects his offer was such that in nine cases out of ten business would result. The words “advertising novelty,” however, conveyed little to the business man beyond the fact that one more salesman wanted to see him, probably to waste his time. The salesman's firm supplied its men with tasteful business cards; but as these explained nothing they all too frequently acted as a hindrance rather than a help. The problem was to win the ear of a prospect before announcing the nature of the business.

The salesman determined to change his tactics and discard the use of a card as a means of passing the outer guard. When asked by the information clerk what he wanted he said, "Tell Mr. Jones that Mr. Blank has called."

When the messenger returned with the request for his card, as was frequently the case, he replied: "I have no cards. Wait a minute, though, I will give you a note."

Thereupon tearing a plain sheet of paper from a pad he wrote in pencil, "I have to leave town tonight. Cannot return for three months. Must see you now for four minutes if possible to make report complete. Persistent in asking for an interview because the matter is urgent and vital for you."

This free and easy message while not very explicit was at least courageous. We all admire courage and pertinacity and neither a business man nor his buyer ever resents the forcing of an interview if the salesman quickly justifies his aggressiveness in his opening statement.

§ 108. The Nerve of a Book Salesman

If the path of the salesman selling such a specialty as advertising is thorny, that of the high-priced book salesman is barricaded with rocks and barred gates. As a rule the book canvasser works doggedly and persistently, knowing that the law of averages will in the end atone for all things and that if he only calls on a sufficient number of persons he will gain a certain number of orders. Some men, however, adopt a more courageous attitude with proportionately better results. They know that their address and personality are such as to permit them to take chances in securing an interview by means of courageous diplomacy, and ingenuity is often revealed in the means they adopt to this end.

An artist in salesmanship with a fair share of that courage which goes by the name of "nerve," determined to secure an order for a high-priced set of books from a bank president.

There seemed little hope of an interview because a man of commercial eminence will not as a rule see anybody until his secretary and perhaps his confidential clerk have first inspected and passed upon the names of those seeking admittance. A few casual inquiries revealed the fact that the bank president was known to his college chums by the nickname of "Chic," an abbreviation of his first name, Charles. Armed with this information the salesman called and asked to see his man.

"Will you give me your card, please?" the secretary politely requested.

The salesman opened his pocket book—to discover that he had forgotten to renew his supply. "I'm sorry to say I happen to be out of cards," he said, "but if you will tell Mr. Blank that Mr. Jones would like to speak to him for a few moments, I'm sure he'll be glad to see me."

"What is your business? The president sees nobody without this information. Are you soliciting a subscription of any kind?"

"No, I'm not," answered the salesman curtly, "but if you will take this note to him he will see me"—and he wrote on a piece of paper: "Dear Chic. I want to see you for a minute. F. J."

The secretary read this intimate message, hesitated for a moment, and then took it to the president. A few minutes later the salesman was asked to come in.

His opening remark began, "Mr. Blank, I have never had the pleasure of meeting you before in my life and I apologize for taking a liberty with your name. But I knew of no other way to see you. I know how many people want your ear and how necessary it is to guard your time, but I just had to tell you about my proposition because it is one that will surely appeal to you. It will take me exactly eight and a half minutes to do so. If you say No, I leave right away. Do I win my interview?"

All this was said, not with an air of apologetic deference, but with the manner of a man who is not ashamed of what he has done and is quite ready to take the consequences if he has made a mistake. The personality of the book salesman appealed to the president and his sporting instinct appreciated the situation. Audacity is always admired. With the right touch of genial salesmanship audacity will carry a man through where timidity and hesitancy spell abject failure.

§ 109. Sheer Nerve Sometimes Wins Out

The biggest rewards fall to the salesman who successfully tackles those jobs which require in addition to all other qualifications of salesmanship, a certain amount of audacity and nerve. As before mentioned audacity in forcing one's way into the presence of the buyer is justified only by results. The offer must be such as at once to convince the prospect that it is worth his time and attention.

A new patented ash barrel only needed to be shown to be sold in nine cases out of ten. Yet the salesman handling it was frequently refused admittance because both his firm and the invention were still unknown. After sending in his card a message usually came back to the effect that "Mr. Blank is sorry he can't see you today." So the salesman changed his method. When the road to the buyer's office was in sight he would frequently reply, "Thank you," and walk right past the girl at the information desk into the buyer's sanctum. Immediately on entering he placed a model of the barrel on the prospective buyer's desk and in nine cases out of ten the buyer was too surprised to say anything for a minute or two although occasionally he might resent the salesman's entry with such words as, "Didn't the boy tell you I couldn't see you?"

"Yes, he did, Mr. Brown," the salesman would cheerfully reply, "but that was only because you didn't know just what it is I have to offer you. Now if I am taking up your time

when you are really too busy to see me, say so and I will leave at once. Meanwhile just inspect this model of our new patented ash barrel. It speaks for itself. Notice how these wooden staves make it impossible to dent the sides. . . I'll call again tomorrow morning and hear what you have to say about it."

This last example of winning an interview represents the climax of audacity. Audacity, however, is rarely necessary. For the average salesman the best method is to adhere to the well-worn road of steady pertinacity backed up by invariable cheerfulness in spite of refusals. If judgment is revealed in selecting prospects no serious difficulty will be encountered in securing all the interviews that can be handled. The house-to-house canvasser who is selling coffee will, of course, waste his time if he persistently knocks at the back door of the White House and asks for the President's wife. But where a salesman is handling a proposition which he knows is worth examining, then the art of winning an interview simply resolves itself into making a sufficient number of calls in likely quarters and interesting the prospects who decline to see him by means of suitable personal letters or other advertising literature. By such means those who at first resolutely refuse an interview are finally won over and the barricades are lowered.

CHAPTER X

THE GENERALSHIP OF THE PREAPPROACH

§ 110. The Value of a Few Definite Facts About the Prospect

Two life insurance salesmen representing different companies called upon the head of a large brokerage house. Smith knew that the prospect was a cautious, successful business man with a reputation for driving a hard bargain and nothing more. So he emphasized the advantages of insurance from the viewpoint of safety and business protection and he laid stress upon the financial strength of his company. His appeal was made wholly to business acumen. While the prospect seemed interested, no decision was reached.

Jones, his competitor, before calling on the broker made a few inquiries about him. In addition to the information secured by Smith, he ascertained that the prospect was a martinet in business and also in his home. The only person before whom his manner ever relaxed in its severity was a crippled daughter on whom he lavished all his affection. He seldom mentioned her and few people knew of her. Jones discovered this fact through a friend who was a member of a club to which the broker belonged.

When Jones opened the interview he outlined the advantages of his offer as briefly as possible and then asked for a decision. As he expected this was in the negative. "Mr. Blank," he continued, "you are a successful business man. You have a justly earned reputation as a keen investor. You can invest your money to much better advantage than the majority of business men. But your capital, or most of it, is at present tied up in industries which may or may not prove

prosperous in years to come. The normal course in most businesses is growth and expansion followed by a decline and in many cases failure. If you should die or have a serious breakdown—and these are possibilities you must contemplate—your genius for investing ceases. Your present investments may not prove so profitable in the future as they are now. If others had the investing of your money they might lose it and if they did your family would suffer.

“Now think of the future, say, of your daughter under these circumstances. She might be compelled to live under conditions which when compared with her present position would be comparative poverty. Deprived of the luxuries she is accustomed to, it would be doubly hard for her. You are entitled to take chances in your own business but you ought not to make those dependent upon you share the risks which you as a business man incur. An annuity such as I have suggested would lift your daughter above any future possibility of want.”

The appeal here was made first to pride, the suggestion being that few equaled the broker in his genius for investing money; and second to parental affection—but in a brief and business-like way to appeal to the broker’s temperament. The offer immediately took on another aspect in his eyes and a sale eventually followed.

§ III. How the Specialty Salesman Makes a Preapproach

This anecdote illustrates the value of the preapproach—which is to ascertain something of vital interest to the prospect and then connect the selling argument thereto. Its importance is well illustrated by the methods of specialty salesmen.

Before a cash register salesman tries to sell a machine he carefully inspects his ground. He enters the store of an unknown prospect at a busy period of the day when several customers are waiting to be served. He then makes a trifling

purchase which necessitates the giving of change so that he can study the cash system in vogue. He notes the kind of cash drawer used and the method of handling the sale. If an old-fashioned till is in use he recognizes a good starting point for his sales argument. If possible he enters into conversation with the clerk. From the baskets on the floor he ascertains how the merchant delivers the goods and from the bills in the basket the method of handling charge transactions. From the fixtures and show cases he notes whether or not the business is progressive. From the kind of scales used he judges whether the retailer is a believer in modern improvements; from his store windows whether he is smart enough to take advantage of advertising space; from the general appearance of the store and the clerks whether he is a believer in neatness and discipline.

Armed with this information the salesman is in the position of a lawyer who prepares his brief before the case is tried. He is fully equipped to point out the weakness of the store's present system—and his knowledge is based not on surmise but on the facts of existing conditions. The influence of an argument based on fact is far greater than one dependent on guesses or random assertions.

Thus the advantages of using an up-to-date register which is adapted to the special needs of a particular store, can be pointed out much more logically and clearly than would be possible without the knowledge gained by the preapproach.

§ 112. Metaphorical Definition of Preapproach

The preapproach, especially if the sale relates to a high-priced specialty, may be likened to the policy of the general who never enters into battle until he is fully prepared. Long before the clash takes place he studies the ground—its topography, its defences, its strong and weak places; he gathers all possible information concerning the enemy—his where-

abouts, his strength, the disposition of his forces. With this information in his possession a plan of action is prepared.

Like preparation will furnish the salesman with valuable information and this, if tactfully used, will give him the advantage of choosing his ground and the point of his attack. A salesman who ascertains the weak places in a customer's defence knows both the arguments which will be most effective and whether any objections to the purchase are real or merely excuses. Meeting the objection, as will be seen later, is often half the battle in making a sale.

§ 113. Illustrations of the Value of the Preapproach

A successful sewing-machine salesman knew before he called on a certain housewife that she was the mother of a family of five, that her husband was earning thirty dollars a week, that she was clever with her needle, and that much of the sewing was done in the home with an antiquated and out-of-date hand-machine.

"I have come to show you how you can do twice the amount of sewing you now do without your arm growing tired, Mrs. Smith," was his opening remark.

The encyclopedia salesman tries to ascertain whether there are any children in the home. He bases his appeal on the fact that an encyclopedia is just the thing for children of more than average intelligence and will be of invaluable assistance to them in acquiring more knowledge than the average child and will help them in their education in future years. He thus appeals to parental pride and the thirst for knowledge.

§ 114. Useful Information for the Retail Salesman

Retail employees can also make profitable use of any facts or information about their customers; these may be picked up by means of gossip, by studying the local papers, or by keeping the ears alert during social hours.

A retail salesman heard that a certain customer who came into the store regularly to buy a daily paper and an occasional magazine was about to go on a voyage to Europe. When the customer next visited the store the salesman mentioned how interested he was to hear of the contemplated trip and how he himself longed for such an opportunity to travel. The conversation was thus led to the unusual sights to be seen in countries where a different language is spoken and different customs prevail, followed by casual mention of the fascination of owning a camera and recording these novel sights. The suggestion bore fruit. When the customer left on his voyage he took with him a complete photographic outfit—purchased at the store of the salesman who made the suggestion.

§ 115. Try to Find Out the Customer's Name

While knowledge about a prospect's needs and his likes and dislikes is the most important factor in the preapproach, other details are worth attention. One of these is the customer's name. To know its correct pronunciation places the salesman in an advantageous position. To address somebody by name furnishes a point of contact, even though a slight one, and everyone likes to hear his or her name pronounced correctly.

The foregoing point is worth bearing in mind by retail salespeople. Customers in a store like to think that their patronage is appreciated. When they are addressed by name, it signifies that the clerk or the storekeeper is interested in them and this presupposes a desire to please and serve. A regular customer takes it as a matter of course to be addressed by name; but a person who is so addressed on the second visit is almost sure to feel flattered by the small attention and, in consequence, a little more at home in the store. To make customers feel at home paves the way for the repeat order. Therefore, every retail salesperson should make a point of

memorizing the names of new customers so that they can be addressed by name when next they call.

When selling from house to house even the humble canvasser makes a practice of asking for the name of the family living next door. If the housewife is particularly obliging he may request and note the names of several of her neighbors so that if he is refused a hearing at the next house he will still have in reserve the names of other prospects.

§ 116. Ascertain the Quantity of Goods Used

Useful preliminary information for the wholesale salesman is the amount of goods usually ordered in a given case.

Wholesale houses generally prepare these figures for their representatives' use when possible but for obvious reasons they are not available when an unknown prospect is being called upon for the first time. A cursory inspection of the buyer's shelves, if he is a retailer, will indicate roughly the amount of stock carried and enable the salesman to estimate the quantity that will probably be ordered. The value of this information lies in the fact that it enables the largest reasonable purchase to be suggested without incurring the risk of irritating the buyer by suggesting an amount far beyond his needs or a quantity so small as to offend his dignity.

§ 117. Where the Neglect of the Preapproach Proved Fatal

The importance of the foregoing knowledge is illustrated by the following incident.

A young salesman representing a stove house was visiting a small town in Montana. The general store of the community was housed in a rambling building and filled with a heterogeneous stock of goods. The part of the store frequented by customers was much like any other general store and did not indicate an exceptional turnover. Its owner was shabbily dressed and unkempt.

Appearances are often deceptive and the same importance is not ascribed to them in a small town as in a city. This storekeeper was a shrewd buyer with a keen sense of humor. A favorite query of his was to ask an unknown salesman what quantity of goods the latter thought he ought to buy.

When this particular poser was put to the salesman, the young man first glanced rapidly around the store to size up, as he thought, the situation. After a moment's reflection he advised a stock of not more than twenty stoves—a dozen low-priced numbers and two assortments of the higher-priced ones.

"Well, my trade last year in stoves alone was over \$10,000," replied the storekeeper to the startled salesman, "but as I want a little concrete advice as to what stock to order this year and as I can't build up my business by guessing or trading with guessers, I think I'll wait until another stove salesman comes around." With this the interview closed.

After the crestfallen salesman had withdrawn, a few inquiries at the local hotel and among townspeople elicited the information that this storekeeper employed a dozen teams to distribute his goods; that he handled a substantial mail order business as well; and that his yearly sales were well over the quarter million dollar mark. A cursory preapproach would have told the salesman that the buyer was one of the most important in the state.

§ 118. The Preapproach Essential Before Estimating

In trades and businesses which render a service for which estimates are frequently submitted, the preapproach is a useful means of finding the suitable opening wedge. A salesman of printing, for instance, need never be at a loss for likely customers however dull trade may be. Advertisers especially are large users of printed matter and their material is distributed free to all who ask for it. The salesman who keeps his eyes open for publishers or users of the kind of printing

for which his house is equipped can often gain an interview and an order by first submitting samples and prices. This necessitates a careful preapproach and study of the concerns which seem most likely prospects.

In making quotations, as in all other statements of fact, it is important to be clear and definite. Aimless quoting of prices for a lot of things a buyer cannot use only bores him; complicated figures which need close study irritate him. But clear and concise quotations for the kind and *amount* of goods he usually buys are interesting items of information to which he will be sure to give careful consideration.

§ 119. Summary to Part I

In every selling force certain salesmen stand head and shoulders above the rest of the staff. Though personality may contribute to their success, often the most important factor in this success is a profound knowledge of the line and skill in the presentation of its advantages. This skill is acquired by preparation and by the close study of different ways of presenting the offer. The trouble with many mediocre salesmen is that they attribute their lack of success to the difficulty of selling their line or specialty rather than to their own inadequate preparation. The man who is prepared at every point overcomes obstacles that otherwise would prove insuperable.

In the first part of this book the ground work of the sales preparation is considered. The salesman must first analyze his offer in the way described; he must then build up his sales talk as here outlined; and this he should memorize in every detail. Prepared in this way he will find himself equipped with a wealth of argument which will enable him to do justice to his offer in every situation. In the next part of the book will be considered means and methods of turning this preparatory work to best account when face to face with the customer.

PART II

IN CONTACT WITH THE CUSTOMER

CHAPTER XI

THE DELIVERY OF THE SALES TALK AS A WHOLE

§ 120. The Complete Sales Talk Must be Flexible

Presuming that the preparatory work outlined in preceding chapters is completed, the student will now have at his command a number of pithy arguments designed to appeal to different buying motives and to various types of buyers. From a selection of these elaborated talking points he will be able to build up a composite and convincing sales talk which will describe the merits of his offer in an effective way.

A flexible sales talk constructed from a number of carefully worded arguments, which are designed to answer every query or to meet all likely objections, is better than a set talk that is carefully memorized. It must be borne in mind that business argument and explanations should be as brief as circumstances permit. Busy men have rarely the time or the patience to listen to a long, oration-like sales talk. An opportunity rarely presents itself for the delivery of an address on the merits of the goods and if it does, this at best is apt to be a stilted and dismal performance.

Brevity, on the other hand, is always emphatic and it provokes the listener to respond. The object of a sales argument is not to talk *at* a customer in the hope that if he only listens long enough he will ultimately believe in the truth of what he hears. To secure mental assent to the salesman's claims and statements it is important that the customer himself be drawn into the discussion. The sales talk should take the form rather of a debate than of an oration.

§ 121. Disadvantages of Cast-Iron Sales Canvass

It is true that firms which employ salesmen for the purpose of house to house canvassing usually prepare a complete sales talk or "canvass" as it is termed. While the salesman is studying the mysteries of the goods, he is expected to memorize this canvass word for word. The idea in committing to memory a complete sales talk is not that it will ever be delivered by rote, but that it will completely equip the salesman with a series of arguments that experience has proved to be best—to be used as occasion requires. Such a canvass always embodies the combined experience of the men most successful in handling the line and in reality is a list of elaborated talking points arranged in logical order and developed from the viewpoint of interest to the customer. The weakness of the single, set sales canvass is that it is too rigid and not sufficiently adaptable to varying situations.

The salesman who, as suggested in this book, has at his command a number of statements to be used for the purpose of attracting attention at the opening of his interview, others which arouse interest by explaining clearly just what the product or offer will do for the customer, and others again which describe in detail the technicalities of the offer, has really constructed several complete sales canvasses which he can vary to meet varying situations. The advantage of this method is that when the complete sales talk is constructed as occasion demands from a series of short talks, it becomes a more pliable argument than one that is learned by rote. The salesman who has memorized a set recitation is likely to be thrown out of his stride when he is interrupted in the middle of his speech. He then finds it difficult to return to his argument at the point where he broke off and the impression made on the customer by the talk as a whole is confused and ineffective. A sales talk gains in strength when each point makes a clear-cut impression.

§ 122. The Language and Style of the Sales Talk

The quality of a man's education and the limitations of his vocabulary will be revealed in the construction of his sales argument. If he is to approach an educated type of buyer he must at least show intelligence and education commensurate with the dignity of the proposition. A man of education will experience little difficulty in changing the wording and the phraseology of a sales talk when necessary, so that it will appeal to persons of different degrees of education and on different intellectual levels. For example, when offering stock remedies to farmers it would be obviously inappropriate to use the same style of language as when selling shares in a steamship company to a body of financiers or medical books to a doctor. The sales talk must be appropriate to the ears which are to listen to it.

The salesman must also have a definite idea of the proper sequence of what he is going to say. The argument must be constructed not only to suit the line of goods which it describes and the presumed intellectual level of the different types of customers who are to be influenced by it; it must also lead naturally from one point to another covering each point completely as the argument develops. If a clear impression is to be left on the listener's mind there must be no confusion and no retracing of steps.

§ 123. How to Make the Sales Talk Convincing

Given the adequate preparation revealed in a clear and logical presentation of the argument, there are several points to be borne in mind if the sales talk is gradually to lead the buyer from interest to desire.

The talk as a whole must be delivered with earnestness and enthusiasm. Unless the salesman believes in every word he says he cannot transmit his belief to others. As the subject of enthusiasm is so important as to form almost a separate

phase of the study of salesmanship, it is discussed more fully in Chapter XXVII.

§ 124. Meeting the Objections of the Buyer

The salesman must be prepared to answer objections—not only those raised in criticism of his offer, but those which have nothing to do with it. These may be more or less personal and pertinent to the buyer. The most common of these objections, which in many cases are mere excuses, are considered in Chapters XVI and XVII. In every interview one or more of these irrelevant objections or excuses will almost certainly be raised. Many an interview which seems to be progressing favorably may end in failure unless the salesman has mental alertness and argumentative skill. Probable objections to the goods can frequently be best disposed of by meeting them before they are brought up.

Experience will quickly reveal the chief criticisms that are likely to arise in the mind of the average buyer. The salesman must prepare effective answers. A cautious and deliberate type of customer may magnify every conceivable disadvantage and tone down or discount all favorable arguments by one-half. An effective procedure in such a case is to mention some of the objections that may possibly be raised against buying, together with an appropriate answer so worded as to reveal their futility or the fact that they really “cut no ice.”

§ 125. Securing the Customer's Assent to Claims

Every sales talk includes a certain number of claims as to the merits or advantages of an offer. If the customer is to be impressed with its value he must be brought to assent to these claims and assertions. This is particularly true when an assertion is made which is in any way open to question; or which through lack of proof tends to produce skepticism. Unless this mental assent, either tacit or verbal, is secured for

every claim or assertion made, when the time comes to close the sale the customer may turn round and state that for certain reasons the offer is not advantageous. The difficulty of closing the sale will be greatly increased unless the salesman not only removes all doubts and fears from the buyer's mind, but replaces these with positive belief in the truth of claims and statements which have been made.

In arriving at this mental assent the attitude of trying to drive the customer into a corner by the sweeping force of the argument should be carefully avoided. Rather should the salesman's manner reveal a sincere desire to reach a reasonable basis of agreement. Thus a statement or claim which is obvious and appeals to common sense can be put in the form of a query, so as to elicit from the customer the reply, "It is so." If the query results in a negative answer and there is no further proof to offer in support of the claim, then it must be modified until the customer is willing to admit it as a truth. But admit its truth in one form or another the customer must.

§ 126. How to Build up a Strong Claim Step by Step

A strong claim or even a sweeping assertion, which at first view the customer would be inclined to deny hotly, can often be made with safety, if it is deliberately built up step by step. A cash register salesman, for example, might assert to a retailer employing a dozen or more salespeople that in the course of a year he loses at least \$1,000 because he is not equipped with an up-to-date cash register system. In every case such a statement would be flatly contradicted. So he secures assent to the assertion in this way:

"A general proposition, Mr. Jones, is that no matter how careful the storekeeper and his clerks may be, they are only human and are likely to make mistakes. Any system that is dependent upon human memory is open to mistakes. This you agree with, do you not?"

No one can contradict this general statement and the store-keeper readily admits its truth.

"Now, Mr. Jones," the salesman continues, "considering that to err is human, isn't it possible that such errors occur in *your* store to the amount of a *few* cents a day?"

Mr. Jones is compelled to admit that such errors *do* sometimes occur and he has known them to occur in *his* store.

"Then, Mr. Jones, you discover these losses *sometimes*. Couldn't they sometimes happen *without your discovering them?*"

Mr. Jones is again compelled to admit that this may be the case.

"Now, Mr. Jones, if this could occur sometimes without your knowing it, then why couldn't it happen many times and you never suspect it? How do you know that it doesn't *happen every day?* In short how do you know that you are not losing a large sum a year because you are not equipped with an up-to-date cash register system?"

This is a perfectly logical climax. Hardly any dealer can dodge this last question or fail to be impressed by the statement, because he has been compelled to admit the truth of all the former premises. As before mentioned, when the time arrives to close the sale, success will depend largely upon whether the customer has mentally admitted to himself that the offer includes all the advantages claimed for it. Unless the customer can be made to see these advantages as the salesman sees them and to acknowledge that he believes in them, he may apparently be listening to the argument and at the same time be actually churning over in his mind reasons why he should not buy; these sooner or later will find expression. By pinning the prospect's mind down to an acknowledgment of the claims made, one by one, the salesman gradually carries him along the mental journey that leads away from objections to the buying point.

§ 127. The Time for Silence

There is a time to be silent as well as to talk—even in salesmanship. The salesman who thinks that he must do most of the talking and that he is winning over his customer only when he hears the sound of his own voice, greatly injures his chance of making a sale. He should guard against presuming to give advice to a customer who neither asks for it nor wants it, and above all, advice of a technical nature to the man who undoubtedly knows his own business much better than the salesman.

The representative of a lithographing house called on the advertising manager of a large company to show several samples and designs suitable for advertising show-cards. He opened the interview in this way:

"We do work for the Star Packing Company, The Able Biscuit Company, and other large advertisers. I have got a sketch here which you will have to admit is going to sell some varnish for you. One of our artists drew it up and the minute I saw it I knew it was just the thing for your line. It is only a small sketch, of course, but we can elaborate on it if it appeals to you."

All this and much more the salesman reeled off while he untied his parcel and placed the sketch, to which he had referred so triumphantly, in the center of the buyer's desk.

"You see," he began again, "we can put some copy right across the sky if you want us to. Some little slogan like 'The Varnish of Value' will be enough and down in this corner you ought to put the price and"

He got no further. The irate buyer swung round in his chair and fiercely faced the salesman.

"See here," he snapped out in a grim voice, "are you or am I the advertising manager for this concern? Do you or do I know what we need and what copy to use? If you will shut up for a minute and give me time and opportunity to

collect my thoughts I will try to see if we can make any use of this idea. You have been doing a vaudeville monologue ever since you came in here and you haven't said a word yet. Now keep still and give me a chance to think."

This anecdote illustrates better than any number of precepts that during the sales interview there is a time to be silent as well as a time to talk.

§ 128. Put Yourself in the Buyer's Place

The fact that to offer advice of a technical nature if unasked for will generally be regarded as presumptuous, need not deter the salesman from giving such advice as he knows will be appreciated because of his wider source of information. The secret of many a man's success is the fact that he tries to place himself in the position of his customers—not only as purchasers but also as sellers of his merchandise. When the salesman considers his offer from this point of view, and in his appeal to customers makes them understand that he is considering how they are to sell the goods just as much as he is thinking of his own order, he wins their confidence and trust.

When the style appeal is an important factor in the sale the purchaser often depends upon the judgment of the salesman whether he is on the road or behind the counter. The salesman should therefore study the class of trade to which the buyer caters or the shopper's needs and inclinations; then if advice can be given on the basis of his own experience, or if his judgment is relied upon, he should not scruple to state his own opinions.

§ 129. Hold the Primary Object in View

However fluent, interesting, and instructive the argument may be, the fact must be kept in view that its main object is not to entertain and instruct, but to close the sale. One of the disadvantages of learning a complete canvass by rote

is that it may be thought the time has not arrived to close until the argument has been delivered as a whole. When the speech is completed and the buyer fails to respond by signifying his willingness to order, the interview becomes flat and depressing. It is then likely to degenerate into an effort to persuade the buyer to purchase against his will.

The salesman who keeps in mind the primary object of his interview watches the buyer closely. He uses only those portions of his argument which naturally develop from the attitude and questions of the listener. At the same time he loses no chance of closing the sale, because he strives to ascertain from time to time how the mental changes, which will gradually lead to the acceptance of his offer, are progressing.

The adaptation of the sales talk to buyers of varying temperament is discussed in Chapter XIV and various methods of bringing the sale to a close are considered in Chapters XVIII and XIX.

In conclusion, sound judgment and a knowledge of human nature are needed to select the particular selling arguments that will most appeal to different needs and varying types of mind, to know when enough has been said about the merits of the proposition, and to realize when the time has arrived to close.

CHAPTER XII

THINGS TO REMEMBER IN OPENING THE INTERVIEW

§ 130. Make a Good First Impression on the Buyer

First impressions may sometimes be misleading, but they are at times exceedingly important. Upon the impression made during the first minute or two of the salesman's interview will frequently depend the opportunity to explain his mission and thus secure a sale. For this reason in the training of the salesman emphasis is rightly laid on his personal appearance, his clothes, his manner, and his personality as a whole. When he creates an unfavorable impression because of defects in any of these points, he may fail to secure that attention which is the first step in presenting a successful sales argument; he then breaks down in his effort before he even secures an opening. When he makes a favorable impression and answers all questions in a convincing way the buyer at once becomes interested and is willing to have the proposition explained.

If the first interview is a failure a second opening will be difficult to secure. A sale is rarely made in the first interview when the transaction is of any importance or when the first sale is expected to be followed by repeat orders from time to time. But when a favorable impression is made during the first call and the interest of the buyer is aroused to the point of displaying some sign of geniality, then the salesman has every reason to hope that persistence in calling will ultimately lead to a trial of his line or his specialty.

§ 131. Appearance in Selling a Specialty

Probably the sales which call for the greatest degree of diplomacy are those offering a service, such as insurance or advertising, in which the prospect must first be made to realize his need, and the sale of a comparatively high-priced specialty to a small storekeeper, because in this case the investment is a big and unusual expenditure. When negotiating one of these sales the importance of making a favorable impression both in appearance and in the opening statement is paramount—as exemplified in the following extract taken from the sales manual of a house selling a well-known specialty. With this firm the art of approaching a customer is considered the most important detail in a sale, to which the art of closing comes a close second.

“The first point in approaching the prospect is to look like a gentleman, act like a man, and make him listen to you. The next thing is—not to half persuade him that he ought to buy, but wholly to convince him that he ought to look into the subject. Free his mind at the start from the impression that you are trying to force him into buying something he doesn’t want. Disclaim any such intention. But insist that it is a matter of such importance that he positively ought to investigate and judge for himself whether or not our service will be of help to him in his daily work.”

§ 132. Insist Upon the Customer’s Undivided Attention

After being admitted to the customer’s presence the salesman should decline to describe his offer until the listener is able to give him his whole attention. A common practice among business men when they are found working at their desks is to say to the unknown salesman, “Go ahead, I can listen to you while I work, I’m busy.” To such a statement the salesman should promptly reply, “Thank you, I am perfectly willing to wait until you are at leisure,” and the action

can be suited to the word by the salesman taking a seat. The salesman breaks into the presence of the business man and occupies his time because he is convinced that his offer is worth serious consideration and the time needed to explain its merits. Therefore, if he is willing to accept only a half-hearted form of attention he involuntarily depreciates the worth of what he has to say. Instead of doing business on an equal footing he adopts the attitude of asking for a favor.

A salesman entered a retail store and found the merchant engaged in opening cases. The salesman was invited to "go ahead and tell his story," the merchant at the same time continuing his hammering.

"My proposition," replied the salesman, "is important enough to deserve your whole attention for a few minutes. If you can't give me your whole attention just now, Mr. Blank, I will call again this afternoon at whatever time you say."

The salesman's polite insistence made the merchant realize that his business must be worth serious consideration. So he ceased the work of unpacking, which as the salesman shrewdly surmised was of no immediate importance, in order to hear what the representative had to say. A manner which is courteously firm, as in the case just mentioned, will usually succeed in securing the customer's undivided attention.

A salesman new to the game usually fails to appreciate the importance of firmly waiving aside any attempt to give only partial attention to what, after all, is an important and legitimate kind of business interview. If an influential customer called on a firm and asked to see its head he would be given prompt and undivided attention. The go-ahead-and-tell-me-your-story attitude would be suicidal. Yet the importance of transactions between buyer and salesman are as a rule of much greater moment to a firm than any transactions with an individual customer. Obviously, therefore, the

only dignified course for the salesman is to insist upon receiving the prospect's attention.

§ 133. How to Patch Up a Broken Interview

When a prospective customer is found to be engaged with somebody else or when somebody interrupts the interview, the salesman should wait until the buyer is at liberty to give him his undivided attention. Interviews are frequently disturbed in this way. When a break occurs it is important briefly to recapitulate the selling points already made in order that the argument may lose none of its effect. If the salesman continues his talk without this recapitulation he may leave out one or two links which help to build up the mental processes which lead to desire. The very fact of being disturbed makes the customer forget for the time being what the salesman has been saying, and a repetition in brief outline of the argument so far developed is always a wise precaution.

Salesmen calling on the retail trade will frequently receive a curt reply that the merchant is too busy to talk, especially when the visits are made at frequent intervals. In such a case there is nothing to do but to reply cheerfully, "All right, I will call again when I am around this way next week. Hope to find you at liberty then." A cheerful response of this kind usually makes the merchant feel a trifle ashamed of his discourtesy or abruptness and the next time the salesman calls he is given a more genial reception.

§ 134. Handling the Customer with a Grouch

Notwithstanding careful practice in the art of approaching a customer, a salesman may still be so unfortunate as to impress the buyer unfavorably without being in any way to blame. The prospect may be in a bad humor, his digestion may not be working satisfactorily, or other conditions wholly beyond the control of the salesman may be responsible for

an ungracious reception. Whatever the cause, when the buyer reveals a serious grouch the salesman should not allow an ill-tempered reception to modify his own attitude. Ill-humor can often be dissipated when it is cheerfully ignored. The salesman should continue his demonstration as if completely unaware that the buyer is not in the right frame of mind to give him close attention.

Whether or not the grouchy buyer can be placated will depend upon the skill shown in winning his interest to such a degree that he forgets his ill-humor. A prospect who is obviously in a state of mental irritation cannot be led to the stage of interest. Mental irritability makes the buyer wholly incompetent to concentrate his mind on the offer which is about to be placed before him. If he starts with a prejudice against this offer and then refuses to give it the consideration it deserves, his irritability quickly degenerates into annoyance. If this unfortunate stage is reached it may be advisable for the salesman to quit.

§ 135. Never Apologize for Taking Up a Prospect's Time

A salesman should never apologize either by word or manner for taking up a prospect's time. As before stated his visit is as much for the buyer's benefit as his own, and his attitude should reveal this fact. The salesman who enters a customer's presence with an apology for breaking in or who in any way implies by his manner that he is mentally apologetic, will fail to secure that undivided attention which must precede the awakening of interest and desire. The salesman should assume that when the prospect is ready to be interviewed he is also ready to give all the time necessary.

When, however, the buyer takes the lead himself and explains that for certain reasons he is rushed or he has little time to spare because he has to leave town, it is then polite for the salesman to apologize with such a remark as, "I am

sorry to arrive at such an inopportune moment, but since you are so busy I will make my story as brief as possible." Even here, however, the apology is not for taking up a customer's time, but for calling upon him at an inopportune moment.

§ 136. The Use of a Business Card

If the salesman represents a well-known house with a reputation behind it, which is in itself an asset in gaining an opening, it would be obviously advisable to send in his card to a prospect on whom he calls for the first time. Where, however, the name of the firm conveys little to the prospective customer and the salesman must depend wholly upon the merits of his offer and his own personality in making a sale, it is preferable to dispense with the card so that the attention of the buyer is wholly concentrated on the salesman. It is much easier to say "No," "Too busy," or to make a similar excuse while inspecting a piece of pasteboard than when directly confronting the salesman.

Many salesmen make a practice of placing a card on the desk in front of a prospect or of handing it to him at the time they make known the nature of their business. The advantage of this method is that it creates a double impression on the mind of the buyer; a disadvantage is that more attention may be given to the card than to the salesman. Whether or not a card should be used will depend largely upon the personality of the salesman and the nature of his business. It is a question every salesman must decide for himself.

§ 137. When to Shake Hands

The "glad hand" is considered an invariable part of a salesman's greeting. If friendly relations have already been established, the hand, of course, will be offered and cordially shaken. When approaching a stranger or a prospect who has not yet favored the salesman with an order, although a

perfunctory acquaintanceship may have been established, it is not wise to offer to shake hands. Prospective customers do not as a rule gladly welcome the presence of a man who politely insists upon their listening to an explanation of his offer. Sometimes they even view his effort to gain their presence as an intrusion, although they may admire his persistence.

When, therefore, an interview is granted, if the salesman effusively offers his hand, this in a sense commits a customer to at least placing the salesman on a friendly, as distinguished from a purely business, footing. A proffered hand-shake may never be refused, but in the case of the taciturn and reserved, or the cold and cautious type of customer, the hand-shake will tend rather to accentuate than to diminish reserve and caution. Where previous correspondence has in any way established an acquaintanceship, a salesman may perhaps offer to shake hands; but a safer rule to follow is to wait until a prospect offers his own hand before the salesman offers his.

§ 138. The Correct Use of "Sir" and "Madam"

The general attitude and bearing of retail salespeople towards their customers have been discussed in Chapter VII. The approach of the retail salesperson to a shopper who has just entered the store will now be considered in greater detail.

The customer who enters in a business-like way obviously comes in with one of two objects in mind—either to buy certain goods or to inspect them. If the salesman is unoccupied he should at once acknowledge the shopper's presence either by stepping forward or, if he is behind the counter, by moving a step in the customer's direction. The opening remark may be "What may I do for you today?" or it may be merely, "Good morning" or "Good afternoon," with the adjunct of "Sir" or "Madam," as the case may require.

When the customer is known he or she should, of course, be addressed by name. But as in the majority of cases the shopper is a stranger, it is far more polite to show the slight deference signified by the words "Sir" or "Madam" than to address a nameless and indefinite person. Under no circumstances should any other form of address be substituted for either of these two words. "What can I do for you, 'Mister' or 'Ma'am' or 'Lady,'" are ill-bred provincialisms used by those who wrongly imagine that the use of the words "Sir" or "Madam" denotes servility. No person of any education or breeding fails to use the word "Madam" when addressing a woman whose name is unknown. If this is the custom in the society of those who pay attention to the finer shades of manners and courtesy, it surely befits the retail salesperson to adopt the same form of address.

§ 139. Helping the Customer Who Is Looking Around

Unless a desire is shown to wander around and inspect the stock, the salesman may take it for granted that the customer requires his services. When customers come into a store without any definite intention of buying, they should not be made to feel that they are under any obligation to do so. Such a type of customer is usually of the feminine gender and quickly reveals her lack of purpose by the indefinite air with which she gazes around the store. She is usually best left to her own devices and any insistence will frequently lead to her rapid departure from the department or egress from the store. All that the retail salesman can safely do to gain her attention is to say, "May I help you to find anything today, Madam?" or a remark to this effect. If the customer replies that she is "just looking around," the salesman may add that it would be a pleasure to give her some information about anything that interests her. The object is to gain the expression of a definite want or desire.

§ 140. How to Handle More Than One Customer

If when waiting upon one customer another approaches, one of three methods may be adopted. If another salesperson can be summoned to attend to the customer, so much the better. A well-organized store usually adopts a system whereby each salesperson waits on customers in turn.

If no other employee is available, then the presence of the customer must be acknowledged by such a remark as "I will be at your service in a moment, Madam"—but only if the purchase which the first customer is making is such that the salesman believes his services will soon be available. This may be safely presumed if the purchase of the present customer is of comparatively small value and does not require much time in its selection.

The third course is to wait upon both customers at once. This, however, can be safely done only when a purchase which demands time and care in making a selection is under consideration. Care must be taken not to neglect one customer in favor of another. But if one customer is inspecting different pieces of dress goods or buying an article which demands careful consideration before a final decision is reached, then an expert salesperson can safely wait upon two or even three customers at once. In such a case a customer often prefers to be left alone in making the choice rather than feel that the salesperson is expectantly awaiting a final decision. Therefore, by serving two or more customers at the same time the salesperson allows each to make a careful inspection and trial of the stock without in any way hurrying them in the pleasant task of shopping. To please customers is the first consideration of the retail salesperson.

CHAPTER XIII

THINGS TO REMEMBER IN THE BODY OF THE INTERVIEW

§ 141. Things That Jolt the Harmony of an Interview

In the preceding chapter the salesman's attention was drawn to several little things he must bear in mind when opening the interview. Not that any of these points or even all of them taken together are vitally important. But if a favorable impression is to be made at the opening of the interview each has its sphere of usefulness. Attention to these details is essential for the construction of the perfect whole.

When the salesman is finally launched in his sales argument there are things he must remember to do and others he must refrain from doing, if the interview is to proceed harmoniously. Neglect or ignorance of these details may produce such a mental jolt in the prospect's mind as to switch him from the straight road leading from attention to action, and all efforts to get him back on the track may prove unavailing. Many an interview which opens promisingly is marred in this way. Perhaps the salesman fails to read his man aright and says or does something which jars; or he "knocks" his competitors; or he makes claims which seem exaggerated because they are unsupported by proof and this shakes the confidence of the buyer in the truth of his statements. When confidence has given place to distrust there is little chance left of making a sale.

All this naturally leads to a discussion of the importance of sizing up a customer. But as this in itself is a subject big

enough for elaboration into a separate chapter it will be left for later consideration (Chapter XIV). In the present chapter we will study some of those little matters which, if practiced when in the presence of the customer, will help to make the sales talk, and thus the preparatory work, of the salesman most effective.

§ 142. Make the Argument Applicable to Prospect's Needs

When constructing his sales talk the salesman has in mind his customers in general. He cannot plan his arguments to appeal to a particular person or to special conditions in this person's business. When delivering them, however, a slight modification of wording will often make the sales talk definitely applicable to the prospect's needs or business. When this is possible it should be done, as thereby the appeal gains greatly in force.

For example, the bread salesman when delivering the argument about the demand for his product might say, "Mr. Brown, you have a good store here and I should judge about three hundred customers come in daily. Of these three hundred customers a conservative estimate is that at least one hundred and fifty buy 10 cents worth of bread daily, or \$15 worth, which makes just about \$100 for the whole week. Now I should like to know how much bread you sell each week."

"About twenty dollars worth," replies the grocer.

"Then isn't it obvious that a good many of these one hundred and fifty customers are going elsewhere for their bread supply although they buy other things from you? . . ."

The argument expressed in this way gains in force and interest. It directly links up the sale of this particular brand of bread with the grocer's store. Such a modification as this can always be made after the salesman has obtained specific information about a particular case.

§ 143. Avoid Mentioning Competitors

The argument can always be strengthened by mentioning in some way its connections with the prospect's own business. It can rarely if ever be strengthened by mentioning a competitor's business.

A farmer entered a general country store and asked the price of an incubator. The salesman named the figure and, wishing perhaps to display a little affability, added, "That's cheaper than you could buy it from a mail order house."

"I bet you it isn't," retorted the customer.

The salesman contended that the incubator he was offering could not be bought for less anywhere. An argument followed. The farmer left with the determination to prove that the price of the mail order house was lower. A few hours later he returned in triumph with a catalogue and the salesman was compelled to admit that his statement was incorrect.

This incident illustrates the folly of mentioning competition unless the customer himself broaches the subject. A comparison of values may never occur to the mind of the buyer until the idea is first suggested. Only when the customer himself alludes to competing goods is the salesman entitled to remember that they exist. He can then make definite comparisons between his wares and those of a competitor. In doing this, however, he should avoid making disparaging statements—termed "knocking," in the vernacular of salesmanship. Quite naturally business men or retail shoppers always suspect the salesman who tries to belittle competing goods in order to enhance the value of his own. In doing this he is obviously prompted by self-interest, so that the statement is bound to be discounted.

A furniture salesman replied to a buyer who had just explained that a certain order had gone to a competitor, "Why, their chairs will fall to pieces in six months!" Such a tactless observation as this reflected on the judgment of

the buyer. It was obviously made from an interested motive, and it was just as obviously exaggerated. The buyer knew that the firm he was dealing with merited his confidence and so the salesman lost all chance of any further business in that quarter. •

§ 144. When Comparisons are Permissible

There is an important difference between “knocking” and making fair comparisons. When the customer first alludes to competing goods the salesman’s aim should be to show the points of superiority in his own, rather than to show that his competitor’s are of poor or inferior quality. He can cheerfully admit that the competing goods have points in their favor, if at the same time he takes care to show the superior merits of his own.

Thus when the farmer stated that he could buy more cheaply from the mail order house, the salesman might have replied, “Yes, I’ll bet you can, but if you do make a bit of a saving, is it worth the trouble? First you have to write out an order, and then wait for the darn’d thing to come, and when it does arrive it may be busted or battered in transit. Then you have the trouble of writing to straighten out the matter—in fact with many mail order transactions there’s all sorts of trouble.

“Now when you buy an incubator from us you see it right here on the floor. You can pick it to pieces and refuse it if there’s a scratch on it. It’s delivered to you the same afternoon and you know that if anything goes wrong with it, we are right here and always ready to make good without delay.”

This is an example of the skilful use of comparative statements. A trifling advantage in price is contrasted with the more definite advantages of buying locally rather than from a mail order house, and is in no way disparaging to the goods

sold through the mail. The attention of the buyer is switched from the goods, which are almost identical in value, to the certainty that his purchase will prove satisfactory in every way.

Thus when the customer makes a direct comparison which indicates that he considers competing goods offer advantages not included in those before him, the salesman as a rule can offset any features in favor of a rival's merchandise with one or two points that are favorable to his own. The better policy is always to acknowledge a superiority in a competitor's goods, if the salesman himself is convinced of this superiority. Having acknowledged the worth of a competitor, the value of the claims made for his own goods will be greatly enhanced.

§ 145. Competition May be Mentioned When Expected

When a customer after listening to the salesman's argument affirms that the price is high and seems reluctant to place an order, the inference may safely be drawn that he is mentally comparing the goods before him with those of a competing house—if competition is to be expected. In such a case general reference to the subject may be made without specific mention of any one competitor.

For instance, a salesman offering a filing cabinet to a prospect whom he knows to be considering various devices with a view to economical selection, might remark, "Our cabinets combine every convenience that a filing cabinet can possibly give. A filing cabinet is not a complicated piece of mechanism. There are several good makes on the market. We do not claim that ours possesses any special advantages over others. But we do claim that our manufacturing facilities and our large volume of trade enable us to place a lower-priced filing cabinet on the market, which when quality and price are considered, cannot be equaled by any other house." He then sup-

ports his claim with figures as to sales, and he mentions the names of well-known firms which use the filing cabinets.

If at this point the customer mentions some special feature of a competitive cabinet, such as a temporary filing drawer, which is not included in the salesman's office equipment, the reply might be made, "Yes, I admit that that is sometimes useful, but just notice the convenience of this, . . ." and then the salesman points out any advantages his own product may possess over those with which the buyer has made a comparison. When selling in a competitive field where such comparisons are likely to be made, part of the salesman's preparatory work is the study of competitive goods.

The importance of making clear-cut comparisons rather than vague, disparaging comments is fully appreciated by salesmen who handle specialties. The adding machine, the typewriter, or the cash register salesman who finds another machine in a prospect's office boldly places his own product at the side of a competitor's and then shows in detail just what his machine can do that the other cannot. He points out any superiorities in construction which his machine may have. He compares the finish, if this is possible. He makes comparisons which are definite and fair about things which the prospect can see for himself, so that the truth is self-evident.

§ 146. When Demonstration Is Essential

The art of demonstrating the goods and thus making the sales talk live and interesting has been considered in Chapter VI. The practice of this art should when possible form part of every salesman's preliminary preparation. As already explained, the selling talk becomes more interesting and more convincing when it is possible to show in graphic fashion what the goods will do or what are their special qualities. When handling a specialty a demonstration is in many cases absolutely necessary to effect a sale.

The advantages of a demonstration are so obvious that they need not be further emphasized. It is well to point out, however, first, that a demonstration can frequently be made where it is not always customary to do so, and second, that the demonstration becomes doubly effective when the customer can be made to handle the goods. The retail salesman when showing a scarf may be content to place a box in front of a customer, name the price, and let it go at that. The salesman who knows his business picks up a scarf, winds it around his fingers in such a way that the customer can see how it will look when tied, and with extended arm admiringly looks at it. Then he requests the customer to feel its excellent quality.

As another example, an oleomargarin salesman may talk eloquently of the purity of his product and the equality of its flavor with that of pure butter; but the prejudice of a doubting customer lingers until he is asked to taste the product daintily spread over a biscuit or cracker.

§ 147. Let the Customer Handle the Goods

When the customer can be made to handle the goods he thus proves for himself that the article, machine, or instrument will do what the salesman says it will do. In many cases a personal demonstration is the best of all methods of arousing desire. The clothing salesman requests the customer to remove his coat so that the garment can be tried on and its appearance studied in the glass. The adding machine salesman asks his prospect to test the rapidity with which work can be done by adding and checking up some of his own accounts. The retail salesman in a hardware store when a customer asks for a screw-driver demonstrates how easy it is to drive in screws by using a tool with a spiral revolving handle and asks the customer to try it out for himself on a board specially provided for the purpose. In most cases the

customer needs only to make the demonstration for himself to be convinced that the article is well worth the price.

§ 148. The Importance of Asking Questions

In Chapter XI the importance was emphasized of securing the mental assent of the customer to all claims, whether relating to the goods in general or to their value in a particular case. It is a safe surmise that the interview is progressing favorably when the customer willingly and readily responds to questions. If his attitude is cold and reserved, this very likely is because he does not propose to buy a thing which he thinks he does not need. When, however, he begins to realize the value of the offer his mental attitude changes. His interest gradually strengthens into a desire to purchase and only his caution or indecision may hold him back. A few deft questions at this point will reveal the stumbling block to the consummation of the sale and suggest arguments which will overcome the final objection. Or better still, those questions may relate to the prospect's own business and thus show that the salesman is looking at his offer from the customer's point of view.

Thus the adding machine salesman who has secured the interest of a prospect to the degree that the latter is demonstrating the machine for himself, may ask what system of accounts is kept in the office, how much the bookkeeper is paid, how much overtime is worked when inventory is taken, how long it lasts, how many statements are sent out at the end of the month, and questions of like nature, in order to show the prospective buyer exactly what saving the use of the machine will effect. A wholesale salesman offering linoleum to a furniture dealer might, after interest is aroused, ask the merchant how much he sold annually, with how much advertising, what other lines he was handling, and so on. At the opening of the interview the merchant would resent

queries of this kind and be disinclined to give such information. If the interview is progressing favorably he will be quite willing to answer. Obviously the replies to these queries will enable the salesman to make a shrewd guess as to the best method of so wording his final appeal that it will surely clinch the sale.

§ 149. Developing Confidence in the Buyer

Presuming that the customer replies readily to the queries put to him, this will indicate that his antagonism to what has seemed the unnecessary spending of money is vanishing and that he is contemplating the purchase. For some reason or other, however, he may still hold back. In all probability he is a cautious or procrastinating type of buyer who needs to have his confidence in the merits of the offer strengthened. If he lacks this confidence he is certain to postpone the purchase and perhaps to forego it entirely. The answers he makes will enable the salesman to feel intuitively where confidence is lacking and needs to be imparted.

The furniture dealer, for instance, may become interested in certain linoleums and admit that the prices are attractive. But if he hesitates for any length of time before deciding to buy, it is safe to infer that he mistrusts some other phase of the offer. He may doubt whether the goods will be equal to sample, or whether deliveries will be made on time, or any of several other reasons may cause his indecision. At this point every effort should be made to increase that confidence in the all-round integrity of the offer which alone may be needed to consummate the sale. The linoleum salesman might mention other large concerns which buy his product, the quantity they purchase, and the length of time they have dealt with his house, as evidence that if such important firms as these deal with him his product must be all that he claims. Or the salesman might tell the prospect something about the

history of his house—the fact that they have been in business over fifty years, or information of that kind.

§ 150. The Use of Testimonials

In suitable cases the best of all means of developing confidence is to place before the buyer indorsements or testimonials from those who have already tried the product. This method is of special value in the sale of a specialty or when selling to the consumer from house to house.

An artist in house-to-house canvassing, who sells soaps of different kinds to the housewife, usually makes his first visit when he enters a town to the Chairman of the Board of Health (if there is such a gentleman), or to other prominent citizens, with the object of securing their indorsement of his goods. This indorsement he uses as a lever in developing the confidence of the housewife. He might, of course, carry with him testimonials from people in other towns; but he knows from experience how much stronger are local testimonials than those of strangers; he knows that in addition to inspiring confidence a testimonial signed by a local user will arouse the desire to follow in the footsteps of others.

§ 151. Where Testimonials Are Most Useful

Testimonials are most efficacious when customers are unable to estimate the value of an article. For example, in buying a washing machine the housewife does not assume to be a competent judge of its durability or the strength of its mechanism. She may like the machine and wish to buy it. But if she lacks confidence in her own ability as a mechanic and wonders how much it will cost for repairs, she may refuse to make the comparatively big investment. But when the salesman puts before her statements from other users who assert that they have never had any trouble with the machine, these testimonials give her confidence in the assurance that

the device will last for years without costing anything for repairs.

In the same way the salesman for a business school or a correspondence course of instruction carries with him testimonials from former students to prove that the course of instruction has been of great value to others and will therefore be of equal value to the prospect. The latter cannot judge from his own observations. If the confidence needed to make the purchase is to be aroused, the claims made must be supported by proof that they are reliable and in no way exaggerated.

§ 152. When to Use Testimonials

In the case of a professional buyer or a man who has a technical knowledge of the goods offered, the salesman should not offer testimonials as evidence of the truth of his statements. Such a buyer can see the quality for himself. To ask him to base his decision on the judgment of others is to cast a reflection upon his own power of judgment. Inexperienced or retail buyers need to have clear and direct evidence placed in front of them. Wholesale or experienced buyers may very likely be repelled by this method.

The sale of a specialty is frequently made to those who know little or nothing about it. Therefore the specialty salesman often makes good use of letters which give the opinions and experiences of users of the goods. When he shows these to a doubting customer who lacks the necessary confidence that clinches a sale, he virtually says, "Don't believe what I say! Here is testimony signed by others as to what my product has done for them."

With a wholesale buyer, procedure such as the following would be preferable, "Mr. Jones over in Watsonville has been handling this line now for six months. I believe you know him. On his last order, which I happen to have

with me, he says it's the biggest profit-maker in his whole line—it has taken much better with his trade than he expected." The salesman can thus quietly and confidently intimate that the letter is in his possession to be seen on request. He does not, however, thrust it before the buyer unless the latter reveals a desire to read it. In this way the full value of a strong testimonial is secured without casting any reflection upon the judgment of the buyer or arousing suspicion that the testimonial in question may exist only in the salesman's imagination.

§ 153. Following Up the First Visit

Sometimes, in spite of every effort to inspire the confidence needed to close, no sale results. This does not necessarily mean that the sale is lost or is impossible. If specialty salesmen gave up a prospect after the first or second futile call, most of the houses they represent would go out of business. A prospect who has shown sufficient interest in any goods to inspect them and ask questions about them may be a much more likely customer at the second or third visit than at the first. If, however, the second or any subsequent call is to be fruitful, the salesman must have additional arguments ready and new facts to bring forward; or he should be prepared to present his former facts in a new way. When the prospect finds that he is being told only what he has heard before, the implication is that he is simply being urged to buy. He then becomes impatient and unresponsive. But when he has once given a responsive audience to the salesman he is doubly willing to hear anything further in favor of the goods, if the additional sales talk presents the offer in a new light and is not merely a repetition of what has already been explained.

A safe procedure to adopt when calling a second or third time is to base the selling talk on a different motive of appeal. In opening the interview the salesman might say that on his

last visit he had said all that was necessary as to the advantages of this offer from one point of view. He had, however, omitted, time not being allowed him, to discuss another and equally important viewpoint, etc., which is, etc., etc.

Thus an encyclopedia salesman, if he is unable to make a sale on the first visit, when his argument is based on the utility of his books as a mine of information, may start his second interview in this way, "Mr. Jones, I have just sold a set of encyclopedia in the limp leather binding to your neighbor, Mr. Blank, the President of the Griffingham Railroad. Have you considered what an attractive addition this handsome set would make to your own library, etc.?" This is a direct appeal to the desire to imitate others and often proves successful where a former mode of attack has failed.

The salesman who studies the cause of his failure with the object of doing better next time will frequently reach the conclusion that he has failed to handle a certain customer in the way that will most forcefully appeal to a man of his type. So he determines to vary his methods on his next visit. This naturally leads to a discussion of different types of customers and how to deal with them.

CHAPTER XIV

DIFFERENT TYPES OF CUSTOMERS AND HOW TO DEAL WITH THEM

§ 154. Sizing Up the Buyer

The salesman should cultivate the art of "sizing up" his customers. To do this seems a simple common sense procedure, and yet many a man has a "cut and dried" way of approaching all customers alike and treating them as if they were all run in the same mold. To size up his man it is not necessary for the salesman to be an expert judge of human nature. He need not be able to tell at a glance whether his customer belongs to one of the three types, which in the jargon of pseudo-psychological salesmanship are sometimes referred to as "sanguine," "nervous," and "phlegmatic"; but it is necessary for him to use his faculty of observation and power of reasoning at least to the extent of determining the probable mode of thought of the buyer as revealed by outward manner and characteristics of speech.

§ 155. How Temperament Modifies the Customer's Attitude

The acts of different persons in the same circumstances or when appealed to in the same way will vary widely as modified by temperament and personal peculiarities. One retail merchant, for example, may be cautious and deliberate in his bearing; another may reveal a nervous, irritable disposition; a third may be genial in his manner and on the surface refuse to consider the salesman's offer seriously. All these types are actuated in their buying by the same fundamental motives

and are interested in the offer for the same reason—to resell at a profit. Their general mental attitude toward the salesman is the same. Yet they are influenced differently by the arguments presented and they view the offer from different angles, because their temperaments or their dispositions to some extent color their point of view.

§ 156. Argument Must Be Adapted to Temperament

While these differences in temperament do not greatly influence the primary buying motive, yet manner and method must be modified to suit the customer's type. Occasionally it may be necessary to appeal to a second and third motive because of their influence upon a particular temperament.

For example, a nervous, fussy hardware dealer, who inspects every detail of a new offer and needs to be reassured upon every point, might be influenced in his final decision to buy if he were informed that such an article as, say, shade rollers would be packed with screws and thus be all ready for resale, and that instructions for putting up the roller would be included in each package. His instinct of caution is appealed to when he learns that he is to be relieved of the trouble of counting out screws, wrapping the rollers, and explaining to his customers how to put them up.

A second appeal to such a buyer's instinctive caution might be made. He might be told that the company represented by the salesman paid freight and would grant him thirty days' credit—ample time in which to open and check up the goods. The appeal is again more to caution than to profit resulting from a saving in freight charges. Further he might be given a written guarantee that any goods returned as faulty would be promptly replaced. All these selling arguments, directed to the motive of caution, would be much more potent in their appeal to this type of customer than to one who considered only the profit on any transaction.

§ 157. Illustration of the Importance of Different Methods

The need of varying one sales argument to suit different temperaments is illustrated by the following incident.

A budding salesman for a wholesale dry-goods house was being shown "how the wheels go round" by one of the older salesmen representing the firm. The two representatives were received with a warm friendly greeting at almost every place of call. Buyers were well acquainted with the older salesman; they enjoyed his good-humored geniality and his intimate jocularity; many of them regarded him as a personal friend. In consequence his opening greeting in almost every case was that of a man on a familiar footing, who feels sure of his welcome.

When the beginner was finally left to his own resources he came to the conclusion that the "hail-fellow-well-met" attitude was the proper one with which to approach his trade. The first buyer he called on belonged to the genial, impulsive type which is always ready to meet a fellow being on intimate ground. The next customer belonged to the cold and calculating type which, as a rule, resents any attempt at familiarity. The salesman greeted both customers jovially, he commented on the weather, and made a few "joshing" remarks as to the buyer's stock and the tastefulness of his display. The easy familiarity of the approach caused no offense in the first case and appealed to the buyer's mood; the same approach in the second case caused irritation.

The cold and calculating buyer wanted to hear about the salesman's offer. He was anxious to decide whether the goods were worth his inspection and to return to his work as quickly as possible. So without any further parley he broke in irritably:

"Well, tell me exactly what you have to show. Be quick, please, I'm busy!"

The tone of voice clearly showed that he was intensely ir-

ritated—not so much with the salesman personally as with his method. Instead of cheerfully apologizing, “cutting out the cackle,” and promptly showing his samples, the salesman assumed an air of injured innocence and in an indifferent mood proceeded to display his line. The interview was not a happy one and was soon abruptly brought to a close by the impatient buyer’s deciding that he required “nothing at all today.” Yet he had invariably given a substantial order when visited by the older salesman. Only the inexperience and the manner of the young salesman caused him to reveal his irritation and cancel the order he fully intended to give to the house with which he had long done business.

§ 158. Futility of Arbitrary Classification

An attempt to classify every buyer as belonging to some arbitrary and definite type is valueless for the reason that no person can ever be said to belong wholly to one particular type. Human nature is complex and too variable to be run into fixed molds. There are, however, certain mental characteristics which are significant and which appear in some form or another in every buyer, such as caution to the verge of suspicion, or willingness to take a chance; ability or inability to concentrate; enthusiasm or unemotional stolidity; impatience or deliberation; and so on. Each of these characteristics has its contrasting attribute. A method or manner of presenting the offer which would appeal in one case might and often would prove disastrous when used with a contrasting type.

The salesman should therefore vary his manner and modify his sales talk so as to appeal to and avoid irritating a buyer’s peculiarities. Nothing in his method of presenting the arguments should rub the customer’s feelings the wrong way. This, as before mentioned, does not imply the ability of a mind reader or the possession of “second sight.” It does,

however, mean that the powers of observation must be used at least to the extent of sizing up the customer as fully as possible. Having determined that the buyer possesses certain characteristics which make it advisable to treat him in a certain way the salesman will then vary his method accordingly.

§ 159. The Easy-Going, Good-Natured Type of Buyer

The salesman will, for instance, frequently come in contact with the good-natured, genial sort of person who is friendly and well disposed to all the world. A customer of this class is as a rule easy to approach—especially if he acts in the capacity of buyer or purchasing agent. If he has any time on his hands and if it is possible to grant an interview, he will do so, even though the salesman may be unknown to him and he does not expect that the proposition will be worth serious consideration.

The manner and the ease with which such a type is approached should not make the salesman jump to the conclusion that it will be easy to secure an order. The natural friendliness of his disposition makes him greet everybody cordially, but his practical business sense, which is presupposed by the position he holds, will cause him to drive a keen bargain or to postpone action if he thinks he has anything to gain thereby.

In approaching such a type the salesman will naturally greet him on exactly the same footing as he himself is greeted. Then if the buyer cannot be convinced that the offer is a timely one, the salesman can at least suggest the hope of better results in the future; for this reason he will persist in calling with the expectation of receiving an order. Where there is little to choose on the score of price, quality, and terms between the goods offered and those of competitors, the only chance of influencing a buyer of this type is to cultivate friendly relations. The art of doing this is discussed in Chapter XX.

§ 160. The Cold, Critical Buyer

The cold and critical customer is in direct contrast to the preceding type. His usual greeting is curt and abrupt. "Well what do you want?" or "What have you to show to-day?" or "I have little time to spare—be quick," he snaps out. His manner conveys the impression that the salesman must be brief about his business if the offer is to receive consideration.

To the inexperienced salesman this type of customer is very disconcerting. It should, however, be remembered that if the goods are what is claimed for them, it is to the buyer's interest to inspect them and give them every consideration. Therefore the salesman should not allow an abrupt manner to fluster him in any way or to curtail the proper presentation of his argument.

When samples or catalogues are displayed, the critical type usually avoids making any favorable comment and expresses himself only when he has something to say that detracts from the value of the goods. It is impossible to work him up to the point of acknowledging his interest, and in consequence the salesman is frequently at a loss to understand what impression his sales talk is making. Any display of enthusiasm only leaves such a buyer cold and indifferent.

In handling this type the salesman should not allow his own conviction of the merits of his offer to be in any way shaken by the customer's cold and cautious attitude. He should go straight to the point, giving an adequate description of his goods, with earnestness, but without any open expression of enthusiasm. A reasoned appeal to the motive of profit, which in such a case is paramount, is all that is needed. Finally when the time comes to close the sale, he should express his pent-up enthusiasm in one strong blast in which the numerous advantages of the offer are summed up. It is important to impress this type of buyer with the fact that the

salesman's opinion of the goods has in no way been shaken by the customer's indifference. The salesman may not be able perceptibly to thaw the buyer with the heat of his own enthusiasm, but insensibly his earnest belief in the merits of the offer will produce an effect.

§ 161. Do Not Teach the Buyer His Own Business

A word of caution is necessary in regard to the handling of the cold and critical customer just mentioned. When approaching a wholesale buyer or a purchasing agent of this type, tact is needed to guard against making any statement which will seem to presume on the salesman's part a greater knowledge of the buyer's business than the latter himself possesses. A person of this disposition usually resents the assumption of superior knowledge in others. A further mistake is to be too loquacious and to insist upon explaining something which is already known or which can be deduced. The incident given in Chapter XI (page 113) illustrates the danger of too much loquacity and too great an assumption of knowledge when the salesman is confronted with the cold and critical buyer.

§ 162. The Self-Important Type of Buyer

The self-important type of customer is sure to be met with in the course of the day's work and the salesman's attitude must again be modified to suit peculiar characteristics. This type can often be recognized by the favorite trick of keeping the salesman, who is shown into his presence, waiting for a few moments while he attends to an apparently important but probably trivial detail of work. Instead of presenting the argument in the form of emphatic assertion, supported if possible by proof—as would be the logical method in the presence of a man who is cautious and undecided—the statements should be turned so as to present them in the form of queries which

will enable the buyer to air his own opinions. When these opinions run counter to those of the salesman the customer does not scruple to depreciate the offer. But the salesman need not worry much about this in the early part of the interview. It is only one of the buyer's little ways.

The weak place in the armor of a man of this type is his conceit. He is clever, but he overrates his own ability. When once he decides that a thing is so, the matter is closed. To question the correctness of his decision or to attempt to explain to him that he is in error and that his conclusions are mistaken, is almost fatal to a sale.

The successful handling of such a customer largely depends upon the skill with which all open contradiction is avoided and an expression of his own opinion secured, as to points which are outside of controversy. "What is your opinion of this, Mr. Blank?"; "I should like to know whether you don't . . . ?"—and similar queries should precede all the claims and statements made. His favorable opinion as to the merits of the various points of an offer can often be extracted in this way.

When the proposition is such that a decision at the first interview is difficult to obtain, the self-important type of buyer can often be encouraged to come to the point if addressed somewhat as follows:

"Mr. Blank, I know from experience that many of my customers like to take time to consider this matter. *You*, I believe, can tell almost at a glance what its merits really are. You are the sort of man who can trust to his own judgment and make up his own mind. I won't ask you to take time in order to look into it—it isn't necessary in your case. How many dozen will you require?"

In short, agree with this buyer whenever possible, ask for information from him when opportunity offers, convey the impression that you are willing to learn from him, and then

if he can give you an order he will do so. But rub him up the wrong way and whatever the merits of an offer he will be blind to them.

§ 163. Other Types of Buyers

It would be possible to list a number of widely distinctive types and to suggest different methods of treatment in each case. The examples given, however, are sufficient to indicate various methods of procedure.

A buyer may lean rather to one type than to another and yet reveal a combination of several characteristics. The method that suits a particular case must be largely what is indicated by tact and common sense. When certain mental characteristics are revealed in a pronounced degree, special treatment will naturally suggest itself. The cautious, nervous type of buyer obviously needs to be reassured on all points and to be given proof in support of every statement. The procrastinating type will need to be argued with in the way suggested in Chapter XVII. The man who likes to take a chance will often buy if an appeal is made to his sporting instinct—and so it goes. This chapter will serve its purpose if the salesman will remember to vary his methods so as to suit different characteristics and thus avoid getting into a rut, as he does when he delivers the same old sales talk in a stereotyped way.

CHAPTER XV

CHARACTERISTIC RETAIL TYPES

§ 164. When the Study of Retail Types is Useful

Nine people out of ten who enter a retail store know definitely what they want to buy; the majority of these nine have an equally decided idea as to the price they are prepared to pay. The housewife who comes with a long list of purchases, the woman who is looking for a particular garment, or the girl who is choosing a hat or a pair of shoes, usually knows what she wants and is determined to find it even if she must inspect a dozen windows or almost as many stores before she discovers it. Thus, it is not so essential for the retail salesperson to be able to read character or to vary the method of showing the goods when dealing with persons of different temperament, as it is to be patient and courteous and to wait upon customers with a sincere desire to please. A sale will then be made if the goods in stock are those that the customer is in search of.

There are, however, two distinct types of shoppers who must be handled with tact if they are to be catered to successfully and if their patronage is to be permanently retained. As these two types form a considerable proportion of the feminine shoppers who frequent the larger stores it is well to consider their peculiarities in detail.

§ 165. The Nervous, Irritable, Querulous Shopper

This type of shopper is not infrequently met with, especially in the larger cities where wealth and fashion hold sway. She

is merely a spoiled child in adult form whose every whim must be gratified. She is used to having her own way, used to being waited upon; she cannot bear opposition; if she fails to find exactly what pleases her or that she is in search of—and frequently she does not know what she wants—she resents the fact as a lack of courtesy on the part of the store and the salesperson who represents it. Because of the irritability of her mental outlook, when she enters the store she expects to receive poor service; she is prepared to resent it, and if she fails to receive it, will still remain querulous. Her request to be shown any particular goods is usually made in a complaining tone of voice. When the article asked for is submitted for her approval she carefully inspects it in search of faults or flaws. If no blemish can be discovered in its quality or style then she either says, "This isn't the thing I want," or she begins to question the price, the size, or what not. No matter what might be shown her she would still have some complaint to make and under no circumstances would she express her complete satisfaction.

§ 166. The Handling of the Querulous Shopper

It is human nature to feel impatient with this type of customer and to experience a lively desire to give her a good shaking. This is obviously an emotion that the salesperson should severely restrain. Often the clerk who starts out with an earnest desire to please reveals indifference to the requirements of such a customer before the sale is completed and forgets that polite attention to a customer's whims should in all circumstances be the distinguishing mark of the efficient salesperson.

This type of customer can be successfully catered to if it is remembered that her mental attitude toward the store and its employees is not personal, but is her usual demeanor to mankind at large. Therefore no resentment should be re-

vealed at her querulous criticisms; on the contrary her whims must be patiently attended to as forming part of the day's work. All criticism should be met with a courteous manner and without any open contradiction. Prompt and intelligent answers should be given to questions, but without volunteering information unless desired. The salesperson should make only such comments as, "This color matches your sample exactly, Madam," or "This is a new kind of cretonne," or "This serge will wear well and does not shine readily . . ." No direct suggestions should be made as to what the shopper ought to buy. It will suffice if the features of the goods are explained without any attempt to influence her in her decision. Any advice proffered invariably arouses impatience and a desire to run directly opposite to it—simply out of contrariness.

The foregoing analysis, of course, presents an extreme case. The type varies from the extreme whom nothing can please, to the much milder type who is merely slightly querulous and whose manner is occasionally illumined with moments of reasonableness. One and all, however, offer an unrivaled opportunity to school one's self in the art of perfect self-control. If the salesperson refrains from revealing the slightest impatience and shows that even the patronage of the customer who is crotchety and hard to please is appreciated by the store, if a willingness is also revealed to show everything in stock that in any way suits her requirements, even a customer of extreme mental irritability will begin to feel that at last she has discovered that ideal salesperson who really "understands her," and then the sale will be made. What is more, many repeat orders will probably follow.

§ 167. The Irresolute, Garrulous Shopper

This type of woman loves to shop. She is happy in wandering through department stores looking for bargains.

She may start her day's trip with a list of half a dozen things required and return home with a score or more of purchases to her credit—if she can afford such expenditure. Because she enjoys the excitement of shopping she does not readily come to a decision, although she quickly reveals enthusiasm when anything is shown that is to her liking. When, however, the salesman gets out his sales slip preparatory to taking her order she begins to wonder whether something she inspected elsewhere would not be better for her purpose. The more articles she has to choose from, the more difficult it becomes for her to make up her mind; yet she will continue to inspect things as long as the salesman is willing to pile them on the counter.

The salesman who leaves the decision wholly to this type of customer will spend many fruitless hours in searching for just the thing that will satisfy her whims in every way. Wholly different tactics must be applied. Instead of allowing her to decide of her own free will, as in the case of the preceding example, tactful suggestions must be made to help her make up her mind, even to the point of telling her exactly what she needs. To do this she should be questioned as to the use to which she will put the article she is seeking.

Suppose a woman of this type enters a dry-goods store and asks to see some cretonne. The salesman immediately places several designs on the counter and notices whether a large or small pattern attracts the shopper's attention. He also observes which colors seem to please her most. With these two points decided he will be able to concentrate her attention on certain patterns when the time to close the sale arrives. By asking how the cretonne is to be used and what colors predominate in the room where it is to be hung, the salesman limits the number of patterns that need to be shown.

When these points are decided he can become more definite

and positive in his suggestions. He decides that certain patterns while charming are not suited for her particular purpose and so he removes them from sight. When the choice finally rests with half a dozen patterns and the customer still remains undecided, the salesman takes up the one which in design and color seemed most to appeal to her at first and says, "All things considered, Madam, this is the one pattern for your purpose. You say it is to be used with a north light, so you must of course have something with gold in it. As it is for your daughter's room you want something dainty, and this certainly is dainty. This exactly fills the bill, and you could not find anything better if made for you."

Here he should sweep all the other patterns to one side, continuing, "Just notice how effective it looks in the length. Isn't it charming? And it is a design that you never tire of. The color will blend with all other colors, in any light. How many yards did you say you required?"

The shopper may agree with the salesman but still add: "Yes, I like that but let me look at the other patterns again."

To this the salesman may reply, "With pleasure, Madam, but I should be sorry to see you select anything but the one in front of you, for this, in my opinion, is much more suitable. No other pattern has these delicate gold stripes and that is just what sets off a room with a north light."

Her possible reply may be: "Yes, perhaps you are right. How much did you say this was?"

"Two dollars a yard, Madam. And how many yards?"

"I think I shall need about twelve."

"Twelve yards of this will cost you \$24, Madam. Where shall I send it?"

Thus the sale is closed. The indecision of a buyer of this type is often due to lack of confidence in her own judgment. The salesman's positive assurance supplies the courage needed to make the expenditure.

§ 168. Summary

The two foregoing types of retail shoppers are presented because they afford contrasting methods of treatment. When handling the irritable, querulous woman shopper the method and manner of the salesperson must, as we have seen, be one of quiet and tactful self-effacement. When serving an irresolute type of person who finds it difficult to make up her mind, the salesperson must try to take command of the situation. This can be done, first by asking adroit questions which will reveal the tastes and preferences of the shopper and then, by means of suggestion and recommendation, she can be helped to come to a definite decision.

The salesperson who can handle both these types successfully will be able to serve intelligently and tactfully almost any kind of customer who is hard to please. Having acquired the art of handling the most difficult types no trouble will be experienced in serving satisfactorily the average reasonable shopper.

CHAPTER XVI

OBJECTIONS AND HOW TO ANSWER THEM

§ 169. Meeting Objections a Necessary Study

While the salesman is explaining the advantages of the offer in minute detail, the buyer as a rule is carefully weighing its disadvantages from his point of view and is silently thinking of reasons why he should not buy. Therefore a sale of any importance is rarely made without the customer raising several objections. In finding clever and convincing replies for these more or less unreasonable objections, the mettle of the salesman is put often to a severe test of mental alertness and tactful pertinacity. A man may have all the requisites of appearance, manners, courage, enthusiasm, and knowledge of his goods; but if he is nonplused when he meets with any objection which may spring from a purely personal cause, or may be merely an excuse advanced for not buying, a large percentage of possible sales will be lost.

When any difficulty is experienced in obtaining an interview, an argumentative debate which will call forth all the resourceful reasoning power of the salesman may be safely looked forward to. The fact that the prospect grants the interview reluctantly indicates that he knows little about the goods or else that he does not think they will be of any special use to him. When in the presence of such a customer the salesman must be primed to meet every conceivable kind of objection. To equip himself so that he can surmount these obstacles he should make a practice of listing the different reasons which buyers advance against buying. Then in his

moments of leisure he can construct carefully reasoned replies and study the art of presenting these replies in an effective way.

There is one way of meeting an objection which is better than another nearly always, and a third way which is best of all. When the salesman knows that he is prepared to answer with a reasoned reply every argument against buying, however trivial or irrelevant these arguments may be, confidence in his own argumentative powers increases. Confidence, as we shall see later, is the secret of courage and courage alone leads to the higher flights of salesmanship.

§ 170. Never Openly Contradict the Buyer

Before we analyze the most common reasons which are advanced against buying and study the best way of meeting these objections, it is well to consider the salesman's attitude when he is compelled to contradict the buyer. To do this in a way which will in no way interfere with the amicable relations necessary for making a sale, requires tact in a high degree coupled with good humor and perfect self-control. If the salesman betrays by the tone of his voice that the objection irritates him; if beneath an appearance of outward calm the buyer can see that the salesman is nettled; then the chance of doing business diminishes at once. The only way in which the salesman can keep complete command over his irritation when an obviously foolish or trivial objection is raised is to maintain and show his good humor.

Behind both tact and good humor there must also be a quiet persistence, a steady determination to refuse to listen to anything excepting a downright "No." To reveal this kind of calm persistence the salesman must be able to answer every kind of objection. The refusal to buy may be a serious reason or a trivial excuse. Whatever the objection he must convince the customer of its futility by the logic of reasoning.

A salesman rather courts an objection which he can meet effectively. Only an objection at which he is nonplused, which he is incapable of refuting, produces an irritating effect.

§ 171. The Mental Indecision of the Buyer

Let us assume that an interview has been granted, that the proposition has been explained, and that the customer displays interest without raising any serious objections to the offer. It is then logical that he should express his willingness to buy; yet he refuses for a trivial reason which may have nothing to do with the proposition. To what can this refusal be due? Obviously to mental indecision and not to any lack of merit in the goods or service.

This indecision may be due to caution, to the habit of procrastinating, to an inability to make up his mind, or it may be due to circumstances which relate to the customer's business and of which the salesman is necessarily ignorant. It is important to study the art of handling the undecided, cautious, or procrastinating buyers. Experience shows that they form the majority of those who turn down a sales offer for a more or less trivial reason.

§ 172. Two Kinds of Objections

It will help the salesman to meet the objections that are usually raised if he will distinguish between them. As a rule they belong to either one of two classes.

First there are the honest objections. Here the customer is sincere in his attitude. He believes that for the reason alleged he cannot afford to take advantage of the offer. A buyer may raise the objection that he has sufficient stock on hand and really cannot entertain the thought of buying more at the present time. This may be a perfectly honest answer.

Objections of the second class are much more frequent and

they differ from honest reasons for not buying, in that they are usually trivial excuses for procrastinating. The buyer may be passively interested and may even in a half-hearted way consider taking advantage of the offer. But because of an innate tendency to procrastinate or a dislike to make the necessary expenditure, he temporizes. Not wishing to be discourteous by openly and bluntly stating that he has no intention of buying he raises objections of various kinds to hide his real motive.

Sometimes the buyer fails to become interested in the offer because the salesman has not yet been given an opportunity to explain its advantages clearly. An excuse is then proffered as a reason for dismissing the salesman such as, "I am too busy to decide today," or "I have no money to spend."

Another kind of excuse or reason for not buying is that frequently raised when competitive goods are being sold. The object in this case is to secure a slight reduction in price or a larger discount than usual. A typical objection of this kind is "I can buy at a better price from so and so." In most cases the salesman will be able to make a fairly shrewd guess as to whether the objection raised is sincere and honest or is only an excuse; or again as to whether it is an effort to beat down his price.

§ 173. Answering Objections and Excuses

Honest objections must be answered by earnest, convincing reasoning. If the reply is not sufficiently convincing to refute the objection or to convince the buyer of his error, then its existence must be acknowledged; but it must, if possible, be immediately offset by compensating advantages.

Excuses are best answered by means of gentle ridicule, the object being to turn the excuse into a reason for buying, as will be shown later; or if the excuses are obviously trivial and raised merely because the customer has not yet been "sold"

on the proposition, they may be ignored as of no importance, and the argument adhered to with the hope that as the customer listens to the advantages of the proposition he will shelve the objections formerly raised. The policy in such a case should be to stimulate his lukewarm desire with a little of the salesman's own enthusiasm until a willingness is expressed to accept the offer. This is often a much sounder method than to try to break down the comparatively trivial opposition that is represented by an excuse.

Objections for the purpose of securing better prices or terms, as explained in Chapter XVII, should be firmly handled if the salesman's experience is that his prices in the majority of cases arouse no criticism. No matter how important the buyer may be, he should not be allowed to beat down the price of an offer as a condition of his patronage.

§ 174. Meeting Objections as to Quality

The most common honest objections are those relating to quality or prices. The goods offered are said to be inferior in quality or higher in price than those of competitors.

In combating the assertion that the goods are inferior to others in quality the salesman should frankly admit the good points of competing goods and then contrast them with points in favor of his own. As emphasized in Chapter XIII, such comparisons should be made only when the subject is broached by the customer. If the salesman cannot refute or explain away some obvious defect or deficiency in his own goods; or if he must admit that those of a competitor are undeniably superior—well—under these circumstances he is representing the wrong house or pushing the wrong kind of merchandise and the remedy is obvious.

Objections or disparaging comments upon quality are sometimes presented without any reference to competing lines. These remarks must be squarely met. Any obvious deficiency

in the goods should be admitted, as when shop-worn articles or "seconds" are offered which are likely to call forth objections as to quality. When a customer knows that the salesman is carefully refraining from exaggerating the quality of the goods these are considered less critically and with their cost price in mind.

Every customer naturally wants to combine the maximum of quality with the minimum price. Goods of an inferior grade may still be an attractive offer at the right price. The "best" quality and the "lowest" price, however, are obviously opposing terms, and an offer which professes to combine the two only irritates the intelligent buyer. A customer is more readily convinced of the unreasonableness of any objections as to quality, if no extravagant claims are made as to the grade of the merchandise offered.

§ 175. Meeting Objections as to Price

Objections raised as to price are the most frequent of all honest reasons for refusing to buy. Many factors need to be known and considered in order to answer an objection of this kind effectively. The salesman who finds that this reason for refusing his offer is frequently raised will, of course, be furnished by his house with the most effective replies that the circumstances of the case permit.

Objection is often made to the price, not from the viewpoint of value, but because it is more than the customer can afford to pay. This objection is frequently heard in a retail store. The goods are too expensive and the customer can afford only something of a cheaper grade. It rests with the salesperson to convince the shopper that the expensive article, if it is a thing to be worn or used, will prove more economical than the cheaper grade in the end; or if it is an article with a style appeal, that the additional satisfaction afforded by its appearance will more than compensate for the higher price.

When the customer cannot be convinced by such arguments as these, something at a lower price must be offered.

Having considered the stock objections as to quality and price in broad outline, let us now consider more specific objections in detail.

§ 176. "We Are Stocked Up to the Limit"

This is a refrain that from time to time is heard in every wholesale warehouse and in every retail store. Occasionally it is offered as an excuse to get rid of the salesman. Frequently it is the truth. If that is the case the reply may be as follows:

"I didn't expect to call and find you out of stock, Mr. Brown. With an article like this in every-day demand you must keep a good supply on hand. Sooner or later, I hope much sooner than you think—as I like to hear of quick turn-overs—you will be in the market again. So I've called to explain my proposition and show you it's to your interest to consider stocking my line just as soon as you can"

In this way the selling talk is again introduced and the mind of the customer is switched back to the original train of thought which may lead to a sale in spite of his complete line of stock:

§ 177. "We Are Well Satisfied With Our Present Connections"

This disconcerting reply is frequently a stumbling block to the inexperienced salesman. The objection, however, is not a difficult one to meet. The obvious answer is that the salesman is not calling to ask for a break to be made with present connections; his mission is to convince the buyer that it will be advantageous to add a new connection. So he replies:

"I am glad of that, Mr. Brown. The firm you are dealing

with is a very good house, but you misunderstand me if you think I have come to ask you to break your present connection. No. All that I ask is that you make a new one—one that in every way will be just as satisfactory to you as your present connection.”

Here the salesman may direct the attention to those samples of goods which compete least of all with those of the rival house. Or if the purchase of the new lines involves the throwing out of a competing line, then the suggestion may be made that the two lines be sold together so that a comparison as to profit and demand can be made.

If the salesman has the good fortune to represent a house which is the leader in its line or which has an unrivaled reputation for some of the goods it manufactures, then the desirability of profiting from the good-will and reputation enjoyed by the house will naturally be suggested to the dealer. To handle a well-known line with a national reputation is an asset in any retail business, and no dealer can afford to ignore the best products of a particular line because he has already made another connection.

§ 178. “No Room for a New Line”

The department store buyer or the big retailer can afford to carry a wide range of brands and yet always find room for a really salable line; the dealer with only a moderate amount of capital to invest in stock must pick and choose with care among the numerous brands offered to him. Thus the small retail merchant who is harassed daily by competing salesmen offering almost duplicate goods frequently raises the objection that he has no room for a new line.

One way of meeting this objection is to remind the dealer that the greatest danger to sound storekeeping is a collection of unsalable stock which fills valuable space, ties up capital, and eats into profits. Of course, to state this fact bluntly

would be to reflect upon the buying and storekeeping ability of the dealer and then all hope of introducing a new line would vanish. It can, however, be done tactfully—somewhat like this:

“Mr. Brown, every merchant, no matter how careful he may be and how clever a buyer, has some lines in his store which don’t sell well and which don’t earn a fair return on the investment. They take up space which could be much more profitably used for more popular goods with a quicker turnover.

“Now you’re a progressive merchant. You don’t handle the same lines year in and year out. You close out one or two lines every now and then and replace them with others.

“Mr. Brown, I’ve tried to show you how it will pay you to close out some of those lines which move slowly and put this in their place and you’ve acknowledged the profit is attractive and they’re likely to prove good sellers. So . . .” —and after a little more selling talk an attempt is again made to introduce the new line.

The objection of the storekeeper that he is all stocked up or hasn’t room for a new line may be an excuse. It can then be effectively met by ignoring it rather than by replying, “Well, you could probably use a little more”—in an inquiring tone. Such a reply is obviously weak since the salesman cannot possibly form an accurate opinion about the dealer’s needs. When there is reason to believe that this objection is real, it can be met by the assertion that the salesman wants to explain the merits of his offer for the prospect’s future advantage. If the dealer reveals no impatience but apparently seems interested in the sales talk, another attempt to introduce the new line can be made as if no objection had been raised. If the dealer still remains obdurate and positively asserts that he has no room for a new line, the only course left is to try to obtain a small order “just for a trial.”

§ 179. Meeting the Pessimistic Mood

Such objections as "business is too quiet," or "times are bad," are frequently raised by cautious and pessimistic buyers, who as soon as a period of business depression sets in, "run to cover." To contradict such a customer flatly by telling the speaker his pessimism is not well founded is tactless, as a man of this type usually resents direct contradiction of his pessimistic mood. Moreover such an assertion lays the salesman open to the obvious charge of self-interest.

When confronted with a pessimistic buyer the salesman should agree that trade is poor and then turn the admission to his favor in this way. "When business is quiet, Mr. Brown, it is essential that something be done to better it. This proposition offers you an exclusive advantage over your competitors and is one of the best things you can do to improve your business. For these reasons"

A self-registering scale salesman meets the objection that "times are bad and I really can't afford it," in this way: "When times are hard, Mr. Brown, it's up to all of us to practice the most rigid economy. One of the best ways of effecting economies in business is to stop the little leaks which are not easily detected, but which amount to a lot in the course of a year. This scale will stop many of these leaks. It is the best kind of economy to invest in for use in your store."

§ 180. Objections on the Score of Taste

Matters of taste should never be questioned. Most of the objections offered by retail customers are of this nature. The woman shopper says that she does not like this color or that style and prefers something else which the store may not be able to supply. It is useless in these circumstances to attempt to prove that the article which does not meet with approval is really equal to that which is preferred. The only course is to offer the customer the best alternative choice.

§ 181. Combating a Positive Statement That is Erroneous

When an erroneous statement is based on a wrong premise the error should be pointed out. This may be an incorrect statement as when a customer says, "I don't think this will wear well." This objection can be answered by describing the nature of the material out of which the garment is made and the reasons why it will wear.

Retail customers are often unreasonable in the objections they raise as to price and not infrequently are mistaken in the assertion, "Your price is too high." If so the assertion should be tactfully contradicted—as in the following example.

A lady presented a prescription at a drug store and asked how much it would cost to fill it.

"Seventy-five cents," was the reply.

"Why, I had it filled up the road for 50 cents," she exclaimed.

The salesman answered: "In having this prescription filled by us, Madam, you may be absolutely sure that it will contain exactly what the doctor orders. We check every prescription over twice. Two different men handle it so that there is no possibility of making a mistake. If a drug is not fresh and up to strength we reject it, even if this entails a heavy loss. The drugs we use are the best procurable for the price. This means that they are of the strength that the doctor expects them to be. A cheap prescription which is not what the doctor intends, you will admit is often money thrown away. In view of this service our price is only a fair one and I believe that is the reason why the doctor asked you to come to us."

It will be noticed that in such a statement as this the fact as to the price being high is neither admitted nor even referred to. Instead the salesman offsets "low price" with quality and alludes to his price as "fair." To meet an objection obliquely in this way is often the most effective method. The

new train of thought aroused by the new sales argument will often lead the customer to forget his earlier ground of opposition.

§ 182. The Objection of the Disgruntled Customer

Sometimes for one reason or another a customer is offended at treatment received from the house on some former occasion and vents his spleen on the salesman. Under these circumstances the only course may be to ask the customer to state the nature of his complaint. If it is reasonable the salesman should undertake to see that the firm makes proper amends; if unreasonable the customer must be tactfully led to look at the matter from the other fellow's point of view. If he will once admit that his grievance is really not based on logical grounds it will vanish. Not infrequently the customer who is reasonable at heart will concede when confronted in this way that his attitude has been needlessly resentful, though it does not follow that this admission will lead to an order.

A salesman representing a packing house accepted the order of the retailer in a small town, but as he was severing his connection with the firm employing him he carelessly neglected the order in many details. The firm made amends for the neglect, but these failed to satisfy the dealer. When a new salesman called on this customer he was met with abuse and the assertion "I don't believe in your firm."

After patiently listening to the dealer's grievances the salesman explained that as he had nothing to do with the order and as the firm now considered the matter closed he could do nothing to obtain redress. On his next round a month later he again called on the dealer, and chatted for a while in a friendly way. The same thing happened the next month and so on for more than a year. Frequently the salesman gave the dealer some valuable business information picked up on

his rounds. Finally after a dozen calls during none of which was the question of an order once raised, the dealer said to the salesman, "Why do you trouble to call on me? You never solicit."

"No," was the answer, "you told me the first time you saw me that you didn't believe in my concern and I certainly won't ask you to buy goods of a concern you don't believe in."

"Yes, I used to feel pretty sore against your firm," replied the dealer, "but I can't help thinking that if all you men stay with it as you do, it must be a good concern to work for and a good house to trade with. I've got a small order for you today if you want to take it."

The salesman had been patiently waiting for this opportunity. When he left the store with his order he had the satisfaction of knowing that his persistence had resulted in transforming what is usually described as a "knocker" into that most valuable of all assets among customers—a "booster."

CHAPTER XVII

EXCUSES AND HOW TO MEET THEM

§ 183. Introductory

In every sale the customer is pulled two ways. He appreciates the advantage of the offer and would like to profit from it; but he dislikes making the expenditure because a lingering doubt remains as to whether he will not regret it later. If he has no serious objections to raise he temporizes with an excuse.

When the salesman has failed to pull the customer sufficiently far along the road that he wishes the prospect to travel, he finds himself brought to a halt when he seeks to close the sale, with one or more of several stock excuses. These are sometimes made with the object of temporizing while the customer makes up his mind and need not be taken too seriously. In some cases they may be turned into reasons for making the purchase; in others they may be gently waived aside; or they may be ignored altogether.

§ 184. "I Can't Afford It"

The most common of all excuses is the one "I can't afford it," or "I haven't got the money." This for obvious reasons is never made by a concern of any standing. If a thing is useful to a business or if there is any profit in it the purchase can be afforded. The course to follow when the retail shopper raises this objection has been considered in the preceding chapter. Frequently this excuse for not buying is advanced by the small retailer when faced with what seems an expenditure disproportionate to his income, and in this case it really

means, "I don't think your proposition offers good enough returns for its cost."

It is obviously useless for the salesman to argue this point. A good course is to reply, "It is natural for you to think you can't afford it, Mr. Blank," or perhaps better still, to assume that the customer is merely joking, and then proceed with the selling appeal in an endeavor to make the weight of desire overcome the objection.

§ 185. Examples of Meeting the Excuse "I Can't Afford It"

As an example, a salesman was trying to sell a check protector to a business man who did not possess such an article. After some discussion the prospect said, "I can't afford one at present." This was obviously insincere.

The salesman replied, "Mr. Brown, do you feel that you can afford your fire insurance?"

"Yes," admitted the customer.

"And yet do you realize that your danger of loss from falsified checks is actually greater in business than your danger of loss from fire? This is proved by statistics. Now for example, . . ." and the salesman continued his argument.

An automobile salesman was finding it difficult to convince a prospect that now was the best time to buy a small motor delivery truck. The customer had assured the salesman that he intended to invest in one as soon as he could afford it but in the present state of trade he would have to postpone the purchase.

"Mr. Jones," replied the salesman, "the question is not whether you can afford to buy one of our delivery trucks, but whether in these bad times you can afford to do without it. You have gone over these figures with me and you have seen that you make a saving of at least \$50 a month compared with the present cost of your three horses and two wagons. You have admitted that one of your wagons is so out of

repair that you will probably soon have to replace it and that two of your horses are over eighteen years old. Now these horses are not going to last much longer and they will need to be replaced. At the present price of horse flesh and fodder you will really be throwing good money after bad, if you continue to invest capital in something that's going to eat its head off.

"Now you've had considerable experience with horses and you know that while a sound animal fetches a fair price, an animal that is defective in any way goes for next to nothing. Why not cash in on the full value of your present equipment while it is still sound and make the investment in a motor truck *now?*"

The excuse of not being able to afford the expenditure was thus turned into an argument in favor of it. When a saving in expenditure results from the use of anything or where a profit results from resale, the insincerity of this excuse can always be revealed in the way shown.

§ 186. Offering Easy Terms of Payment

The sincerity of the excuse that a customer cannot afford the expenditure can also be tested when easy terms of payment are offered. Most concerns selling a high-priced specialty to people of moderate means usually make concessions of this nature, because experience proves that the objection raised as to the inability to pay the price means inability to pay a large sum at one time. Sales that would otherwise be lost can frequently be closed when it is agreed that the terms of payment shall be so much on the delivery of the goods and the balance in easy instalments. Many expensive articles for the home are now sold in this way. The fact that a concern is willing to accept payment by instalments, after the customer has had an opportunity to inspect the goods, helps to establish that confidence which is necessary

for the consummation of a sale in which a relatively large amount is involved.

§ 187. "I'm Too Busy to Decide Now"

This may be a message delivered by the office boy or the girl at the information desk when the salesman is seeking an interview; in this case it can be handled in the way described in Chapter IX.

The phrase is sometimes advanced at the end of an interview when the buyer pulls out his watch and notes how quickly time has been passing. As a rule no man lacks the time to do business which he knows will prove profitable. He is in business for that purpose. Therefore when this excuse is raised, the salesman may take it that the buyer has not yet been convinced of the merits of his offer. The excuse can often be brushed aside with an assertion such as the following:

"Mr. Brown, I know I am taking up a great deal of your time, but we are both in business to make the best use of our time. You have agreed with me that my offer must prove advantageous to you in several ways, and that it is worth your careful consideration. No man is too busy to give any business offer that is to his advantage at least ten minutes of his attention. It will take less than ten minutes for me to enumerate exactly those features of my proposition . . . ,” or “It will take less than two minutes to draft out an order . . . ,” and the salesman either works back into his sales talk or makes a fresh attempt to close.

§ 188. "Too Busy to Talk with You Now"

This excuse resembles the preceding excuse, but differs from it in that it is usually made at the opening of an interview especially when a salesman meets the buyer by chance. The prospect has no interest in the offer and is too indiffer-

ent to investigate its possibilities. He therefore makes this excuse, which really means "Don't worry me today, I'm too tired or too lazy to bother with your offer." To such an excuse the salesman may briefly reply as follows:

"I realize that you are a very busy man, Mr. Brown, so I will take up only a few moments of your time. It will need ten minutes to explain just what my proposition means to you. If you'll give me your close attention for these few minutes I shall be able to prove that your time has been well spent."

Whether or not a salesman wins an interview under these circumstances largely depends upon the confidence with which he presumes that it will be granted. As explained in Chapter IX, when he meets a prospect on equal ground he will in all probability be listened to. If he seeks an interview apologetically, as if his offer were of little importance, it will receive scant consideration.

§ 189. "I'll Have to Think It Over"

An excuse frequently raised by the procrastinating type of customer when the time comes to close the sale is that he wishes to have an opportunity to think the matter over. When this phrase is heard the salesman may be sure that his talk has not been sufficiently convincing. The prospect who wants to think the matter over very rarely buys. When left to his own train of thought he will conjure up all sorts of objections because the offer has so far been presented in an inconclusive or indefinite way. When the salesman next calls the opening greeting will probably be, "No, Mr. Blank, I thank you for your call, but I've come to a firm decision not to buy."

Consequently if the salesman is to sell to the prospect who says, "I'll have to think it over," the time to do it is now. To such a remark the salesman should promptly reply:

"Now, Mr. Jones, do you really think there is any need to think it over? Aren't you convinced now? If you are not then I am at fault somewhere. Just tell me the point you are still in doubt about."

The prospect will then often acknowledge that for certain reasons he doesn't think the offer is just what he requires. The argument must then be concentrated on removing the particular objection from his mind—directly if possible or else by a powerful appeal to another buying motive which will be sufficiently strong to make him forget the reasons for his wish to procrastinate.

"I'll have to think it over" is frequently heard in the middle of an interview when the customer who only half understands the offer suddenly decides against it and breaks in on the salesman with the above phrase. In such a case the reply may be:

"By all means, Mr. Jones, I want you to think it over, but in justice to me and my proposition before you think it over you ought to allow me to make clear in how many ways you are going to benefit from it in your business. When you do clearly understand its benefits you may possibly think that it needs very little thinking 'over.'" And so he continues his sales talk.

§ 190. "Suppose You Call Again"

An objection in many respects analogous to the offer to "think it over" is when the customer replies at the close of the interview, "Yes, I'm interested. But suppose you call again. I'm rather busy now."

Such a postponement will do no harm to the wholesale salesman who may be covering the same ground within a week or a month. He can use his present call as a means of establishing friendly relations by genially replying:

"All right, Mr. Jones, I certainly will call again when

next in town, because I know if you are not in immediate need of anything in my line at present, you certainly will be in a week or two."

An answer such as this, which may be good business policy in the case of a sale of staples, would not do at all when selling a specialty. When confronted with this objection the specialty salesman should candidly say to his customer:

"Mr. Jones, I'm a busy man just as you are and I have to work hard for a living and show results. I have to call on a certain number of clients in a day and having once worked a town I don't come back to it for months or years.

"Now you as a business man know there is no better time to do business than to do it *now*, and here I am right on the spot. You have asked me to call again only because you are not quite clear about some point in my offer and possibly want to study the literature I have given you. Just let me enumerate some of the points previously mentioned," and the salesman swings back into his selling talk by recapitulating those arguments which he thinks will prove most effective.

§ 191. "Stop In On Your Next Trip and Perhaps We'll Do Business"

This like the two preceding excuses is another of those "put off" phrases which are used by the vacillating customer who hasn't the moral courage to come out with a downright "No." This excuse is rarely heard when the salesman has succeeded in arousing real interest. In consequence the obvious answer is to meet this objection with a strong selling talk as to the merits of the offer.

"Mr. Brown," the salesman may say, "if you want these goods at all you want them for the profit they will earn you. By putting off your order until my next trip, which will be at least three months from now, you are losing the profit you

might make on my goods during these three months. Let us figure what this amounts to. . . .”

Excuses advanced as reasons for procrastinating imply that the salesman has failed to arouse desire. In each case the answer must be so worded that he is able to pass behind the objection and proceed anew with those arguments he thinks best suited to the temperament of the buyer.

§ 192. Talk From the Customer's Viewpoint

In all the salesman's replies to these numerous objections and excuses he should answer from the point of view of the customer. For example, when an excuse is made, "I will think it over," the reply should not be, "Well, I would like to have you decide now, Mr. Brown, because I am here and am anxious to get the matter settled." It is better to word the answer in this way, "You are doing yourself an injustice, Mr. Brown, unless you come to a prompt decision. You have me here completely at your disposal. My time is yours. Why not get the matter settled now?"

§ 193. Finding a Point of Agreement

As mentioned in the preceding chapter an invariable rule of salesmanship is never openly to contradict a prospect. No one likes to have his opinions disputed. The salesman can generally find some point in the objection to which he can assent and then, starting with the point of agreement, he can swing around to the answer he wishes to make.

For example, if the objection or excuse is made, "It is too much trouble to add a new line," it would be tactless to reply, "Well, that is no reason why you can't trade with us." Instead the salesman answers:

"Yes, it is some bother, I know, to put in a new line. And yet, Mr. Jones, if you had carried out that idea all the time you have been in business you would not have such a

fine stock or be such a successful merchant as you are now. In these days small stocks and many lines give the maximum returns on your investment. Just consider how much profit in proportion to your other lines this proposition will pay you," and the salesman proceeds to emphasize the point of profit. In this way he switches the thought of the customer from trouble, which is a disagreeable thing, to the desire for profit, which is a much more pleasant thing. In proportion as the case for profit is proved up to the hilt, so will the objection raised on the score of trouble fade away.

A prospect when offered a duplicating machine might object, "I haven't any use for it." A flat contradiction would be, "Yes, you have, only you don't know it." Instead the salesman tactfully replies, "I can quite appreciate why you say that, Mr. Brown. It is natural for you to think that you have no use for this machine, as many other business men who are now using it once thought. I have not yet had the opportunity of familiarizing you with the many things that can be accomplished with this machine. Let me first explain its uses to you and then you will be able to form a correct judgment as to whether or not you will have any use for it."

Other objections that must not be answered directly are those which claim that a competitor's goods are superior in some way. The salesman need not feel discouraged when this objection is raised. It must be remembered that no article can be superior to competitive goods in every way and in every detail. Some points of superiority can be found for both. The salesman's aim should be to present a larger number of facts in favor of his own offer.

Sometimes the objection may not relate to the goods so much as to the service which accompanies them. A customer may argue, "No, I don't intend to give you an order, because I find that we can get quicker delivery from Smith and Company and so I don't have to buy such large quantities at a

time." To answer such objections as these a knowledge of local conditions is needed and for this reason they need not be considered here.

Sufficient has thus far been written to explain that a salesman's success will depend in large degree upon careful preparation and practice in meeting objections and excuses. The reply must be carefully worded, the reasoning must be sound, and the argument must be delivered with tactful emphasis and without a trace of hesitation or apology. To hesitate or apologize where backbone is needed is fatal. Only adequate preparation will enable the salesman to meet objections and excuses with the positive assurance needed to sweep them aside.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE DIPLOMACY OF THE CLOSE

§ 194. The Difficulty of Landing the Order

The "close," as the acceptance of the offer is termed, is frequently referred to as the hardest part of the sale to negotiate. When the time comes for the buyer to say "Yes" or "No" the nervous salesman, who reveals his anxiety to secure an order, may lose many a sale which seems within his grasp. But the man who studies the art of closing as he studies every other phase of salesmanship, and coolly faces this critical part of the interview will find no serious difficulty in bringing it to its logical conclusion.

Buyers often grant an interview, listen to the sales talk, criticise the arguments, and raise objections, real or imaginary—all without any serious intention of giving an order. Then becoming interested, as they realize the advantages of the proposition, they feel half inclined to try it out, though they may have had no intention of doing so at the opening of the interview.

If under these circumstances the attitude of the salesman is at all hesitating when the time comes to close and ask for an order, the chances are that the half-decided customer will draw back. In order to help him to come to the point the salesman must always assume that his argument is wholly convincing and that there is no question but that the offer will be accepted. The mere fact that the prospect listens and assents to the claims and statements made presupposes the final decision to buy. Therefore when the salesman considers that the merits of the offer have been explained in sufficient detail

he should seek to bring the interview to a close by introducing the subject of an order.

§ 195. The Psychological Moment to Close

Much has been written about what is termed the "psychological moment" to close. A particular moment is supposed to arrive somewhere near the end of the argument, when the mind of the customer will be enthusiastically in favor of the offer. For a brief moment he will clearly realize its benefits! Pseudo-scientific salesmanship presumes the ability to sense this particular moment, pounce upon it, and utilize it for the purpose of securing the buyer's signature to an irrevocable contract in a moment of irrational and unguarded enthusiasm.

This psychological moment exists largely in imagination. About half the customers approached definitely make up their minds while the other half wobble mentally. If the skilful presentation of the offer convinces the buyer that it fits in with his particular needs and he has that mental strength which enables him to come to a prompt decision, he himself may bring the interview to a close by saying he will order so much of this, that, or the other. If he belongs to the type which naturally procrastinates and finds it difficult to decide, he may need to be reassured upon many points before the sale is closed.

The art of closing is the ability to find out when and for what reason the customer is still reluctant to buy. He is then reassured upon those points which cause his indecision, until he acquires that complete confidence in the all-round advantages of the proposition which leads to a close.

To be on the alert, like a cat watching for a mouse, for a particular emotional buying wave to pass through the prospect's mind savors more of securing an order by means of trickery than by logical and skilful discussion. There is only one psychological moment to close—when the merits of the

offer have been made so attractive to the cautious or doubting prospect that the suggestion to order, when made with sufficient firmness and diplomacy, suffices to tip the scale in favor of the purchase.

§ 196. Closing Merely the Final Decision

Thus the close is in no sense a water-tight compartment separated from the rest of the sales transaction. What the salesman does throughout the interview is to secure a series of decisions leading to the final one. The close is merely a more critical decision which requires more tact and firmness.

For example, in the sale given on page 35 assent is first secured to the assertion that bread in general is a profitable line to handle. From this the dealer is led to acknowledge the particular advantages of handling an advertised bread which sells more readily than an unknown brand. Just how much profit is to be made by handling White's Cream Bread is then figured out, based on the earnings of other dealers. The argument takes the form of facts and figures which cannot be disputed. Having made the main appeal to profit, the talk as a whole can now be summarized by such a remark as, "This makes a very interesting proposition, doesn't it, Mr. Jones? Suppose you make your order two dozen loaves a day to begin with. That would be about right, wouldn't it?"

This observation is made merely as a "feeler." If the customer draws back and says that he is not prepared to accept the offer the salesman continues his argument regardless of the mental opposition. This time the prestige of handling a well-known brand is referred to and the advertising co-operation offered by the firm as a means of building up trade is explained in detail. If the dealer still remains non-committal the salesman tries again:

"Suppose I put in a dozen loaves a day to start with, Mr.

Brown, and then as soon as possible you can make out that list of people to whom we may send the sample loaves."

By assuming that the last argument must have convinced the grocer of the advantages of selling his bread the salesman makes another attempt to close. But he carefully refrains from putting his offer in the form of a direct query which will permit the dealer to turn it down with an uncompromising "No."

As another illustration, suppose that the customer is a retailer who is buying shirts. He first acknowledges that the shirts offered are attractive in design; then he is assured that the colors will last; the next decision to which he comes is that they will suit the particular trade of his customers; the price he decides is reasonable and the terms are as good as he can obtain elsewhere. Thus when the time comes to buy, his final decision is bolstered up by a series of smaller ones. The close is not a detached mental process wholly alien to the rest of the selling talk but a natural development based on the other decisions. When the salesman seeks to close he does so naturally and without the slightest hesitancy in this way:

"Will ten dozen of these in assorted sizes and patterns be enough for you, Mr. Brown?"

He assumes that the order will follow as a natural sequence to his sales talk.

§ 197. Assume That the Order Will be Given

To assume that an order will surely be given is an important point to remember in every attempt to close. A customer is much more readily led to the buying point if he is impressed with the fact that order-taking is part of the every-day routine of a salesman's interview. When an anxiety to close is revealed and the prospect thinks he is being urged to sign or to order against his better judgment, he at once becomes cautious and draws back. But when the

salesman assumes that the order is merely a routine matter which is the inevitable end of his selling talk, this attitude helps the hesitating buyer to make up his mind. Thus when a stationer asks a certain fountain pen salesman at the close of his sales talk a question of any kind such as, "What are your terms?" the salesman replies "Sixty days net. Two off ten." Then, taking out his order blank he continues, "Now, suppose we start with this style, say two dozen to begin with?"

When selling at retail it is frequently necessary to help the customer to come to a decision in this way. For instance, a man is buying a suit of clothes. He expresses a desire for a particular suit by studying it for a long time, but cannot make up his mind. He takes it off and tries on another. This he quickly rejects. The salesman notices this and asks him to try on the first suit again. When this is done he calls over the tailor and says, "Mr. Smith, will you kindly see what alterations are necessary on this?"—and the tailor begins to take the measurements. The making out of the sales slip usually follows.

§ 198. Avoid the Negative Question Close

To frame the suggestion of an order in the form of a query is never advisable. For instance, questions such as, "What quantity can I send of each kind, Mr. Brown?" or "How soon do you want a shipment?" court a negative answer and an opening is given for a refusal. In the examples in the preceding sections there is no such opening, the presumption being that the order is as good as given. All that remains is to determine the number of loaves, the assortment in sizes and patterns of shirts, and so on.

A salesman in a meat store when asked for a pound of steak cuts off a pound and one-half. "Will that be too much?" he asks the customer. She replies, "Yes, that will," and he then has to cut off the extra weight.

Were he to say "That will be about right, I think?" and look at his customer inquiringly the probabilities are that she would reply, "Yes."

To a customer who has just made a purchase the query, "Will that be all today?" invites the answer "Yes." An intelligent salesperson invariably asks, "What is the next thing, please?" implying that another purchase is a natural sequence of events.

§ 199. Positive Assertions Help the Close

The close of a sale will be more readily brought about if the claims and statements that lead up to it have been made positive or have elicited positive replies from the customer. A salesman expresses himself positively when he shows that his goods are better than those of his competitors—not that his competitor's are inferior to his. When he concedes certain merits to a competitor's lines he enhances the value of his own. The retail salesman when showing two articles to be used for the same purpose states that one is a good article for the price, but that the other is superior or better for certain reasons. The clothing salesman instead of saying, "This suit will not wear as well as that," says rather, "This suit has good wearing qualities but the other will outlast it by a long time." The salesman who says, "I don't suppose you are interested in buying anything today?" is suggesting a negative idea. It is obviously much better to ask, "What are you in the market for today?"

In the same way when the time comes to close a sale the customer will be more readily brought to the point of ordering by such a remark as, "You will be wise to buy these goods now. Six dozen of each kind ought not to be too much for you," rather than, "You will be foolish to miss this opportunity. How many may I send you?"

A little thought will enable the salesman to change the

wording of all closing queries so that they are made in the form of positive assertions. These assume that the order will be given as a matter of course and this assumption has a powerful effect upon the mind of the procrastinating buyer.

§ 200. Picture the Customer Using the Goods

A customer who evidently likes the goods and yet still hesitates, can often be brought to the buying point when an appeal is made to his imagination, by picturing him using the goods or profiting from the offer. This appeal to the imagination is especially necessary when the expenditure is large in proportion to the size of the purchaser's income.

For example, when the buyer of an automobile is accompanied by his wife, the salesman should paint a "word-picture" of the ease and comfort of riding in the car, the enjoyment of its swift motion, the health-giving qualities of pure and exhilarating country air, and the education to be derived from visiting places of interest for miles round.

The retail merchant's imagination can be appealed to by depicting the goods in his store, the fine display they will make on his shelves, and their final sale to customers for their satisfaction and his profit.

A strong appeal can often be made to the pride of the shopper, who can be imaginatively depicted wearing the stylish pair of shoes or the becoming suit or coat which he or she is contemplating buying. To bring the hesitating shopper to the buying point, further indirect allusions may be made to the flattering comments that the article will probably arouse when friends inspect it.

All these are mental pictures which can readily be conjured up when the expenditure is so important that it tends to create indecision. The more naturally and enthusiastically the pictures are drawn, the better the chance of bringing a sale of any importance to a close.

§ 201. Example of Appealing to the Imagination

An employee working in the office of a wholesale house was interested in a course in salesmanship issued by a well-known correspondence school. He had asked for information, but when the salesman called he refused to give a definite decision. In an effort to close the salesman appealed to the young man's imagination in this way:

"Mr. Blank, you acknowledge that one of your ambitions is to be promoted by your firm to an outside position. Now, think of yourself starting out with your sample case. You have studied this course and have thoroughly mastered it. You understand how to meet customers' objections, how to argue, how to close the sale. You will go out with a firm step and your head high because you will have full confidence in your power to meet people and sell to them.

"Well, Mr. Blank, you can start tomorrow. You can begin preparing yourself for promotion and so help yourself to deserve it. When you are ready be sure the position will be ready for you. I have filled out your enrollment application. If you will sign here the first lesson will be addressed to your home tomorrow and you can start your studies right away."

Extracting an application blank from his coat pocket the salesman wound up, "Let me see, what is your address?"

Here is a definite picture which appeals to ambition. The young man sees himself on the high road to promotion, with a sample case in his hand, his step firm, his heart full of confidence. With a pleasant prospect like this before him other considerations, such as the relatively high cost and the time and effort involved in study, fade into insignificance. The mental picture appeals to the motives of desiring to excel, desire for knowledge, love of praise, and so forth; it creates so powerful a desire to profit from the offer that the sale is immediately closed.

§ 202. When a First Attempt to Close Fails

When the first or even the second attempt is made to secure a favorable decision and the customer hesitates without definitely refusing to buy, there is still every prospect of making the sale. In all probability the hesitation is due to the fact that complete mental assent has not been given to all the claims made. To secure this assent the salesman can make a summary of the arguments already used and present them in a series of questions worded to draw an affirmative reply. Or, alternatively, he can accentuate a special talking point and develop it if he thinks that an appeal to another buying motive may prove more efficacious.

§ 203. Example of a Change of Tactics

An automobile salesman after appealing to the imagination by depicting all the delights of owning a motor car vainly tried to close. The hesitating customer refused to give a definite order and insisted that he required time to think the matter over. The salesman thereupon changed his tactics:

"Mr. Smith," he said, "I really believe you wish to think over this proposition, because in your own mind you are not sure whether or not you are justified in incurring this expenditure. You have had no experience so far in running a car and possibly you think that its up-keep and the cost of tires will make a bigger hole in your income than you expect. Now, tell me what in your own mind you estimated it would cost you to run this car? In all probability you've already figured it out."

The salesman shrewdly guessed that he had been appealing to the wrong motive. He judged that the type of buyer in front of him had decided to spend so much for the car and allow so much for its up-keep and running cost. The customer acknowledged that he expected the up-keep of the car would run to at least \$10 a week.

"How often do you expect to use the car? Is it for business purposes or pleasure?"

"Oh, it is purely for pleasure," replied the customer.

"In that case then you will use it only on Saturday afternoon, Sunday, and on vacation days?"

"Yes," acknowledged the prospect.

"Also there will be some days when the weather will not permit you to run about."

"Yes," again acknowledged the customer.

"Well, a fair distance to cover on a Saturday afternoon would be about fifty miles and seventy-five will be the limit on Sunday. So let us see what it will cost us to run this car one hundred miles a week, which would be a good average for the whole year."

Thereupon the salesman put facts and figures before his customer to prove that even if he traveled the maximum distance weekly and allowed a liberal margin for repairs and tire renewal the car that he was considering could not cost in up-keep more than \$5 a week, which would also cover insurance against breakage. A sale promptly followed.

§ 204. The Final Closing Argument

When the salesman lays particular stress on a point or a motive that obviously appeals to a particular temperament he causes this point to assume such prominence in the buyer's mind that it overwhelms all the objections that may hinder the close. When, however, the closing appeal cannot be made to a particular motive, it will be necessary to enumerate all the strong points in regard to the proposition which the customer has previously accepted as true. In doing this there is no necessity to repeat the former arguments; all that is needed is a summing up.

Each point should be made to stand out clearly and luminously. In this way all favorable impressions so far received

are focused so that each seems related to the next and the whole proposition gains the strength of unity and completeness. The mind must be systematically prepared for the close by leading from one statement to another, the interest growing as the argument progresses. The enumeration of the strong points of the offer will then present such a vivid conception of the advantages of the deal, that in the majority of cases little difficulty will be experienced in securing the buyer's unhesitating consent.

CHAPTER XIX

THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN CLOSING

§ 205. The Importance of Managing the Interview

Many a sales interview fails to reach a successful close because the conversation is allowed to drift away from business into talk concerning affairs in general or social doings or happenings. These little side excursions, if not too prolonged, are profitable, for as a rule they create a feeling of friendliness and mutual understanding. In some cases, however, especially in the presence of the garrulous type of buyer who loves the sound of his own voice, a discussion of trivial and irrelevant matters often leads so far from business that it is almost impossible for the salesman to drag back the mind of the buyer to the main thing under discussion. When a customer is allowed to take the bit between his teeth in this way the salesman cannot say what he would like to say, namely, that he hasn't time to discuss things which are irrelevant to his proposition. He must follow the prospect's lead, waiting for an opportunity to steer the conversation tactfully to the main track which leads to decision.

§ 206. Keeping the Prospect on the Track

There are several ways of recalling the wanderer to realities. After the salesman has revealed the interest that courtesy demands in what his customer has to say, one method is to refrain from making any further comments even to the extent of saying "Yes" or "No." If he will look the talker straight in the face and merely nod in assent or shake his head when questions are put to him, the monologue will

soon reach the end of its gallop. As soon as a pause in conversation takes place, the salesman takes hold of the customer by the halter and leads him gently back to the road in this way:

"What you have told me, Mr. Jones, is very interesting and some other time I would like to know more about it; but I must not take up your time now. You were asking something about our terms that I ought to explain. . . ."

When the garrulity of a customer seems like the babbling brook the first opportunity to break in must be seized with such a remark as, "Yes, I thoroughly agree with you, Mr. Jones. Don't think me rude if I break in, but before I forget it I want you to understand thoroughly that part of my offer. . . ." Conversation which is beside the point is thus interrupted and the customer is tactfully led back to the main point.

The most simple of all methods is that of a salesman who makes a practice of reading the local papers in every town he visits. He scans the columns for news items which he thinks will be of general interest. Then if it becomes necessary to interrupt a customer who has wandered from the point, the salesman breaks in upon the conversation with a by-the-way request for information as to what or why certain things are being done in the town.

Diplomacy of this kind is often essential if the object of the call is to be kept in view. If the talkative buyer is given the impression that the salesman's only thought is to discuss business and sell goods, a feeling, if not of resentment, at least of slightly wounded pride, is created. That feeling is adverse to closing the sale.

§ 207. How Much to Sell When Closing

A problem with which the man who is selling at wholesale is sometimes faced is the quantity of goods to be sold in a

given case. An error of judgment frequently made by the inexperienced man is to sell more than the buyer can profitably use. This mistake rarely happens in the specialty field, because a specialty is not bought in quantity for resale but purely for use. But when selling for resale, especially if the line is new to the dealer, when the time comes to close there is often a real danger of overloading inexperienced customers who by nature are optimistic.

In this field the profits depend largely on the number of times the stock is turned in the course of a year. Dead stock represents a large loss and many retail failures can be more or less directly traced to this cause. An inexperienced man often goes into retail business with little knowledge of the field; he fails to study demand; he has no proper system of accounting and is ignorant of the cost of doing business. When he buys a certain quantity on the advice of an inexperienced or unscrupulous salesman and then finds the goods move much more slowly than he was led to expect, and in consequence deteriorate, he naturally feels resentful.

§ 208. When to Sell the Whole Line

On the other hand poor judgment or lack of courage is revealed when the diffident salesman fails to sell the quantity which he believes the buyer can use before the time of the next call comes around. It must be remembered that in wholesale selling it frequently costs more to win over a new customer than the profit on the first sale amounts to. Especially is this the case when a particular article is featured as an entering wedge. Having made an initial sale, elementary intelligence will at once suggest that this is a golden opportunity to make additional sales. More or less friendly relations have been established with the buyer; the first purchase signifies that his approval has been won; in consequence he is in a receptive mood. Therefore, it is legitimate for the sales-

man who handles an extensive line to use every argument in favor of the buyer's purchasing from his whole line.

§ 209. Closing with a Cautious, Doubting Buyer

When closing the sale with an apprehensive, hesitating customer different tactics are needed. First estimating the quantity that the dealer ought to dispose of in a given period, the salesman suggests an amount rather above it. The natural impulse of the cautious dealer is to begin conservatively and take no chances. If the decision as to quantity is left to him he is just as likely to find himself out of stock with no opportunity to refill, as the optimistic type is likely to be oversold. Therefore, when in contact with an extremely cautious type of customer the salesman should mention an amount considerably more than the dealer would ordinarily buy.

A wholesale druggist noticed that one of his salesmen secured larger orders than other men for a special line which was offered in \$5, \$10, and \$25 assortments. When asked how he managed it the salesman replied:

"This is a new line. The dealer does not realize its selling possibilities. So I talk to him always about the value of a \$50 assortment. This as a rule is rather more than he thought of investing in this particular line. When the time comes to close and I finally suggest a \$25 assortment, the amount seems so reasonable that it is bought without hesitation. The average dealer is not oversold when he buys this quantity. Our other men after mentioning \$5 and \$10 assortments try unsuccessfully to sell the druggist assortments at the higher price—and fail."

§ 210. The Signing of a Contract

In the sale of expensive specialties, from an office device to an advertising order, some form of contract must usually be signed. It frequently happens that the prospect views the

offer favorably and is carefully considering it—until the contract is placed before him. Then he draws back simply through his dislike to bind himself in this irrevocable way.

When an objection of this kind is raised at the close of a sale the salesman can meet it in this way:

“I know, Mr. Blank, that there are many business men who dislike signing contracts and I also know that your word is absolutely as good as your bond. But still you will admit that verbal agreements, especially when making a sale of any importance, are not business-like.

“Now, we on our part have just as much to do in filling the contract as you have in accepting it. In this contract it states that we will furnish you with a certain kind of machine at a certain price; the terms of delivery and payment are here in black and white, so that any future misunderstanding is impossible. You note that this contract calls for one of our latest improved machines and also contains a guarantee to keep it in repair. Therefore, it is as much for your own as for our protection. A contract such as this cannot be objectionable to any business man because it binds us just as much as it does you.” Talk such as this is readily adaptable to every circumstance.

A contract of any kind usually involves the writing out of certain details. Therefore, the best method of closing is to lead up to the filling in of these details in a natural way, taking for granted that the formality is a necessary part of the ordering. Under no circumstance should the contract be held in reserve until the last moment and then sprung upon the customer as a surprise.

As an example, the cash register salesman when the time comes to close, extracts an order blank from his pocket and says:

“Now, Mr. Blank, what style of finish would you like on the register? Our usual finish is in gold, but we also make

one in nickel and one in dark bronze. You see we fill in here on the order form the style of finish you desire. On the back (turning it over) is where we fill in the style of name-plate. I must explain that your order includes a name-plate with this machine. Have you a business card so that I can get your initials or the firm name right?"

In this way the merchant gradually sees that an order is to be made out and that in consequence it will be necessary for him to sign it. But the fact that it contains details of the goods ordered suggests to him that this is only customary routine.

§ 211. Rebates and Discounts at the Close

A stumbling block which frequently trips up the salesman when the time comes to close is that relating to a discount or a rebate. The customer may have agreed that the goods are what he needs, that he likes them, and that he is inclined to buy; but at the last moment he turns around and says to the salesman something like this, "Your prices are all right and are the same as those of Smith and Company. But I have always been given a 5 per cent discount at the end of thirty days by that firm and of course you are ready to do the same."

This may be only a "try-out" or it may be perfectly true. The salesman, unless he knows the business policy of the firm mentioned, has no means of ascertaining whether it is true or not. The inexperienced man in his anxiety to secure an order at any cost will frequently cut his own commission, if he receives one, or allow a rebate if this is possible in order to close the sale.

This practice can never be recommended. The salesman presumably represents a house with definite terms as to payment and discounts. He should state what these terms are and then affirm emphatically and definitely that he must ad-

here to the policy of the house. In nine cases out of ten the customer will accept the usual terms.

The inexperienced salesman must remember that the shrewd buyer is always striving to secure the best terms possible both as to price, length of credit, and discount. His mental attitude is that "there is no harm in trying it." But if he is pleased with the goods and thinks that they will either serve his purpose in some way, or are the best among those offered to him—which must be the case when the buyer signifies that he has decided to buy—then the final terms as to discount and length of payment have very little bearing on the close of the sale.

The practice in many cases, especially in selling to the retailer, is to grant an ascending scale of discounts which vary with the amount of the order. Frequently the dealer will ask for the concession of a large discount applied to a smaller quantity, and may even hold out for these terms. The salesman who represents a firm of standing, with a definite and fixed credit policy, usually turns down such attempts to gain further concessions by a frank explanation that his terms are positively so and so and that they are the same for all customers alike. The salesman who represents an unknown house will find that attempts are very often made to secure concessions and rebates of this nature. Whether or not he grants them must be determined by the policy of the house he represents.

§ 212. When Obstacles Arise to Prevent a Sale

Sometimes after an order is accepted, even when a customer has signed a contract, he refuses to carry out his agreement. This may happen because of misrepresentation, since the advantages of the offer have been exaggerated; or because the customer has been "bounced" into buying against his will; or it may be due to timidity and indecision. Whatever the

cause, diplomacy will be needed when the salesman calls to find out the nature of the trouble and bring the customer back to the buying frame of mind.

If there has been no misrepresentation and the only explanation given by the customer is that he has "changed his mind," the presumption is that he was only half sold on the proposition at the first interview. The policy of the salesman will then be to seek a second interview and ask the customer pointblank just why he is doubtful as to the benefits he will derive from the purchase. In this interview it is much better to go straight to the point. The salesman is in an advantageous position, because he is entitled to an explanation from a man who breaks a contract even if only a verbal one. If the customer is merely suffering from "cold feet" at the thought of the expenditure, the salesman should have little difficulty in warming up his circulation through contact with his own enthusiasm. If the reason advanced is that something has happened meanwhile that makes it impossible or inconvenient for the customer to accept the goods, the salesman must use his resource and his special knowledge in an effort to find a way around the difficulty.

§ 213. An Example of Resource in Closing

The importance of resource in such a sales crisis as this is illustrated by the following anecdote:

An insurance salesman after several interviews with an obdurate client who, though he had signified his intention of buying insurance still refused to come to the point, at last closed a policy for \$20,000. When the signature was finally obtained the salesman felt sure that there would be no further hitch as his client was in the best of health, young, and had only recently been married. On the strength of the signature he proceeded to draw his commission.

A few days later to his dismay he heard that the medical

adviser for the company had failed to turn in his report as to the result of the physical examination. The salesman went to the medical officer to find out what was wrong, as the young prospect when last seen seemed to be in perfect health. The doctor told him that the client resolutely refused to answer a vital question in the application form which every buyer of insurance must fill out, and until this question was answered the doctor could not complete his report to the company. The question referred to asked for information as to the cause of death of the prospect's father.

When the salesman called in order to ascertain why an answer to this question had been refused he was told in confidence that the father of his client had been hung as a spy during the Civil War; as this secret had apparently died with him, under no circumstance would the prospect bring it to life again.

At this unexpected difficulty the salesman was at first non-plused. After a moment's quick and concentrated reflection a look of relief spread over his face.

"Oh, I can fix that all right for you. Give me the blank."

The salesman then wrote in the space provided for the answer to the question "cause of death of your father," "Fell from a scaffold; death instantaneous."

"You won't object to this, will you?" said the salesman as he showed it to his client.

"No, that just about covers it all right," was the reply.

The blank went through, the policy was issued, and the salesman collected his commission.

A little resource in emergencies is the distinguishing mark of the alert salesman.

PART III

**THE SALESMAN'S POST-GRADUATE
COURSE**

CHAPTER XX

FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH THE BUYER

§ 214. Friendship Often an Essential Factor in Making Sales

A leather salesman had been calling on a shoe manufacturer month after month for two years and during that time had received only a few trifling orders. On the rare occasion when the buyer granted an interview his manner was gruff, abrupt, and almost discourteous. The interview invariably ended with the refrain, "No, nothing more today. This is absolutely all I need in your line."

One day the salesman chanced to meet the buyer in a street car, attentively studying a seedsman's catalogue. "Beautiful weather for planting a garden, isn't it?" he said genially as he sat down.

"Yes," was the reply, "I left the office early to put in an extra hour's work on mine."

The salesman being an enthusiastic gardener himself knew something about the growing of plants and flowers. An interesting conversation ensued which, before the ride terminated, developed into a feeling of mutual friendliness. Within a week the salesman made a point of calling upon the dealer and opened his interview with the words, "Well, how's the garden today?" An exchange of agricultural lore followed and when the two separated the salesman carried away with him his first substantial order.

This anecdote illustrates the point that in many cases the only possible road to the buyer's favor is to cultivate friendly relations. The salesman may determine the best motive to appeal to in a particular case; he may study his customer's

characteristics; he may arrange his sales talk accordingly; but if his goods are much like those of his competitors and offer nothing exceptional in price or quality, he will often find buyers cold and indifferent. The reception may be more cordial to the representative of a prominent house that stands above its competitors, but a salesman whose house does not enjoy the esteem or admiration of the buyer must expect to meet indifference. Under these circumstances the best course may be to forget the proposition and all its details for the time being and to concentrate upon the cultivation of friendly relations at every call.

§ 215. The Importance of First Impressions

This friendliness is as a rule the natural sequence of an opening order and satisfactory results therefrom. But the difficulty of the salesman in many cases is to secure the opening. Once obtained he hopes that his own personality plus the merits of the goods will enable him to develop a trial order into a permanent and lucrative connection.

Much therefore depends upon the impression he makes on his first visit. If this impression is favorable a feeling of good-will is established, which inclines the buyer to look for reasons why he should buy. When such reasons are sought for, they are not difficult to find. If the opposite feeling is aroused, if for some reason the salesman's manner or method of approach do not please him, the customer tends to be exacting and critical and is frequently unreasonable in the objections he raises against the goods. This attitude of mind is an effectual barrier against forming a new connection.

§ 216. Geniality the First Essential

It is of first importance in the cultivation of friendly relations that the salesman himself shall feel genuinely friendly toward others. An honest wish to please, a feeling of real inter-

est in other people and the desire to help them, a willingness to put oneself to personal trouble or inconvenience in order to be helpful—qualities such as these radiate an atmosphere which other people instinctively like and which makes them ready to listen to the salesman and co-operate with him. Before other people will like you, you must like them. First in importance in cultivating friendly relations is geniality—a sincere desire to be friendly and to please.

§ 217. How Geniality Can Be Revealed

This definition of geniality leads to a discussion of how it may be revealed. One method which every salesman can practice is to think of means of rendering not only the service which should go with the goods, but additional service—a “something extra” the customer does not expect.

A lady entered a drug store and asked the salesman to give her something to cure an inflamed eye. The salesman, noting that the ailment was serious, suggested that it would be wiser and safer for her to consult a doctor. She accepted his advice. He then offered to call up the doctor's office and find out if he was in. The doctor replied that he could see her if she came around immediately. The salesman suggested a taxicab and immediately rang for one on the telephone. Gratitude for the service which was not expected was the natural result—and gratitude is one form of friendliness.

§ 218. The Importance of “Service-Plus”

The foregoing incident illustrates what is known in the jargon of salesmanship as “service-plus.” Most salesmen are reasonably polite and obliging but not all realize the importance of being obliging to the extent of taking trouble and putting themselves to inconvenience when opportunity offers. A salesman who wishes to cultivate the friendliness of his customers must seek opportunities to render this service-plus.

Service-plus comprises not only an earnest and intelligent desire to sell what can be profitably used and thus afford satisfaction, but also a sincere wish to attend to requests or preferences in minor matters which do not always seem of importance when the mind is wholly concentrated upon making a sale. A salesman who remembers every trifling wish or instruction expressed by the buyer, even though not included in the terms of the sale, is adopting one of the most effective means of cultivating permanent, friendly relations. If, in addition, he is able when asked to give advice which can be relied upon, his hold on the esteem of his customer is proportionately strengthened.

§ 219. Examples of Service-Plus

The manager of a large department store chanced to be in the clothing department when a salesman arrived to interview the buyer. The salesman represented one of the largest wholesale manufacturers of clothing in the country. As the expenditure for that department formed a considerable item, the manager remained to help the buyer, if necessary, with his judgment. The buyer continually asked the salesman for advice as to selections and quantities and purchased freely—rather to the surprise of the manager who expected him to distribute his orders among other salesmen.

After the order was finally made up and the salesman had retired, the manager questioned the buyer and said to him, "Why did you buy so freely and trust the judgment of the salesman more than your own."

"Because I have learned it pays to do so," was the reply. "Last year when he called he told me that if he were in my place he would load up on the 'pinch-back' and one or two other styles, which I finally did at his suggestion. You know that at the end of the season we had fewer 'left-overs' in our department than in any other. Yet had I followed my own

judgment we should have been short of our best sellers by several thousand dollars before the end of December, and overloaded in other lines. I have taken his advice as to styles on one or two other occasions and I have always found it right. As he attends to my instructions in every detail and goes out of his way to please me even when I am unreasonable, I give him all the orders I can."

Sometimes the service may have nothing at all to do with the goods or their delivery and if so, it can be rendered with even more telling effect.

A traveling candy salesman reached one of his prospects late on Saturday afternoon. He found the storekeeper greatly rushed, because of a special sale he was holding. As the salesman intended to stay in the town over Sunday, without any words he helped himself to a white linen jacket which hung in an unobtrusive corner of the store, then took up his position behind the counter and began to wait on customers. In former days he had served his apprenticeship in a candy store and so he proved himself as deft and competent a salesman as any other man behind the counter. Needless to say this action resulted in cementing a feeling of firm friendliness.

§ 220. Reveal Interest in What Others Do

A telling method of cultivating friendly relations is to look for an opportunity to show interest in something done by another person. One salesman calling upon retailers makes it a practice to scrutinize closely the window displays and interior arrangement of his customers' stores. When he notes any changes he comments upon them. "That is a fine display you have in the window," he may remark. "Who is responsible for it? It must have cost you a lot of time and trouble"; or, "I like this new arrangement of your fixtures. It's certainly a big improvement." Every retailer as a rule is pleased with his own window dressing and store arrangement. He is

gratified to find that other persons, particularly strangers, take notice of what he is doing.

§ 221. Look for a Ground of Common Interest

Most men have a hobby of some kind. We are gratified when, in discussing things in which we are interested, we find that our tastes coincide with those of others. If the salesman can find out what his customer cares for and turn the conversation around to that subject, so much the better. A hobby is usually a topic of paramount interest to the person who rides it. The more intelligently the salesman can discuss it the more gratified his listener will be.

For example, golf may be the hobby in one case. The salesman can then steer the conversation around to bunkers and greens, where he and his customer can meet on common ground. The topic, which is of perennial interest to its devotees, can easily be broached by asking for information about the local links, the kind of course, the lowest score ever made by the customer, and so on.

A salesman had on several occasions called without result on a prospective customer whose hobby was photography. During this period the salesman also became interested in the art. His first attempts included, as is usually the case, many poor pictures and some complete failures. On his next visit, instead of broaching the business side of his call, he adroitly steered the conversation around to photography. "I understand, Mr. Sherman," he said, "that you are an expert photographer. I bought a camera a few weeks ago but I've not yet succeeded in getting good pictures. Perhaps you will be good enough to tell me what is wrong with my methods." And here he handed some prints over for his customer's inspection. At once the latter became interested and gladly offered much practical advice.

Nothing more was said about business that day, but on

his next trip the salesman noted a more cordial tone of welcome in the buyer's voice than before. Still he received no order. Before leaving he drew a package of photographic prints out of his pocket and handing them over the counter said, "You see, Mr. Sherman, I have followed your instructions and this is the result. There certainly is some improvement. But from what you said to me I rather fancy these two pictures were under-exposed. Isn't that the case?"

The buyer proffered a few more suggestions and they parted good friends. On the next trip the salesman received a small order and thereafter he never failed to secure his share of that buyer's business.

§ 222. Topics of the Day a Point of Contact

Topics of the day sometimes furnish a subject of interest. A salesman had frequently called on a manufacturer without being permitted to interview him. His acquaintanceship was limited to a chance meeting and a nod of recognition. No opportunity for conversation had ever occurred. On his next journey to the town he chanced to be seated in the train behind the manufacturer. The salesman noticed that the customer was reading a magazine article on woman suffrage—a subject which the salesman himself had studied and on which he could talk intelligently. Waiting until the magazine was laid down he leaned over the back of the seat, introduced himself to the manufacturer, who remembered only his face, and asked his opinion as to the probability of the adoption of woman suffrage in that particular state. An interesting conversation followed and before the end of the journey the acquaintanceship was on a friendly footing.

Instead of trying immediately to take advantage of this opening, the salesman merely shook hands at the end of the journey and bade the manufacturer a cordial "good day." The salesman's purpose was sufficiently served by impressing

the prospect favorably with his personality and general intelligence. On his next call a month later an order followed.

This anecdote illustrates two things. A salesman's fund of knowledge cannot be too comprehensive in character, and his powers of observation must be acutely developed. The advantage of picking up knowledge and information of every kind, which is discussed in greater detail in Chapter XXII, may be illustrated here by the following anecdote.

After several fruitless calls on an obdurate buyer a salesman chanced to note in the daily paper of the town he had just visited, an account of an automobile accident in which the buyer's two children had been seriously injured. He made a note in his pocket-book of the name of the man responsible for the accident and a mental observation to refresh his memory when next he visited the town.

"I was sorry to hear of the sad accident to your children," he began when he opened his interview, "but I hope by now both are on the road to recovery. What happened to that road-hog MacPherson? Did the court suspend his license and imprison him?"

The buyer's sentiments toward the careless rider who was responsible for the injury to his children can be imagined, and with this opening a chord of common interest was at once established.

§ 223. The Salesman as a Source of Information

The salesman who travels over wide stretches of country and visits several big cities has an opportunity of comparing notes with his brother salesmen in the same and other lines. In this way valuable information as to trade tendencies can often be picked up. When the buyer is trying to gauge fashion and style or to ascertain the trend of prices in a fluctuating market, he often values the salesman's advice. When an extensive line of samples, more or less bewildering, is brought to

the buyer's attention, his good-will can often be gained by suggesting to him styles which are selling best. Information of this kind can be used frequently as a means of cementing existing friendly relations or establishing new ones. An enterprising house always keeps its salesmen posted with information as to trade tendencies.

§ 224. Friendly Relations in the Retail Field

To cultivate friendly relations with customers is quite as profitable a stimulant to retail as to wholesale trade.

A customer entered a hardware store and ordered a can of varnish. "What is it to be used for?" asked the salesman. "We have varnishes for various purposes."

"I want to give my canoe a coating," was the reply.

"Well, then, you want a varnish that will stand water. Have you entered for the regatta next week?"

"Yes," responded the customer with evident interest. "I am in the canoe race."

A conversation followed about the regatta which soon developed into a bond of common interest between the two. The storekeeper added one more permanent customer to a list of patrons who traded with him because they liked his genial manner and the interest he took in their hobbies.

Sometimes service can be rendered without a word being spoken. Two young people accompanied by an elderly lady approached the soda fountain of a drug store on a warm sunny afternoon. The young people ordered ice cream but their companion did not wish for anything. The clerk in charge of the soda fountain served three glasses of ice water instead of two. As it was a hot day he set the fan over their table in motion. Service-plus such as this is always appreciated and, whether rendered in the wholesale or retail field, develops that friendly feeling which leads to permanent business relations.

§ 225. Summary

The cultivation of friendly relations is only a means to an end when more direct methods of making a sale have proved unavailing. It is not always possible to learn in advance or at the first interview what may be the special interest or hobby of the prospect. In the sale of specialties of moderate value, when a customer is called upon only once or at very rare intervals, this method is impracticable. In wholesale salesmanship, however, and when selling a specialty of sufficient importance to warrant several attempts to make a sale, every effort should be made to learn from observation, from outside information, and from queries to those who are acquainted with the buyer, what his hobby or interest may be. In the hands of a capable salesman this knowledge once gained becomes a valuable wedge of entry against the closed door.

CHAPTER XXI

THE RETAIL SATISFACTION THAT CREATES GOOD-WILL

§ 226. The Importance of Retail Good-will

We have seen how important it is for the salesman and the house he represents to establish friendly relations with the wholesale buyer. It is equally important for the retail salesperson to do everything possible to secure the good-will of the shopper. Customers must be attracted and then pleased before anything can be sold. The ideal in every store should be for every purchase to give complete satisfaction. The nearer the approach to this ideal, the thicker become the strands of good-will that bind customers to the store.

A large department store may spend \$100,000 or more a year in advertising. The firm knows that this publicity will cost several times the profit made on the sales that can be directly traced thereto. The main object of publicity is to satisfy and please the customers who are attracted by it so that they visit the store again and again. In thus securing the customers' good-will the manner and competence of the salesperson who waits on them are important factors in every store.

§ 227. The Study of the Art of Giving Satisfaction

To satisfy customers, therefore, should be the chief aim of every salesperson. The study of the art of pleasing the shopper is a post-graduate course in salesmanship that every retail salesperson needs. Yet the majority of those who serve behind retail counters give little if any thought to the matter. Customers come to the store with more or less decided ideas as

to what they want, and so the assumption is that the sale will depend upon the mental attitude of the shopper. When the sale is made, the important question as to whether the goods will give the satisfaction that can reasonably be expected, or that the salesperson has led the customer to expect, is rarely considered; and if the customer leaves without making a purchase, little thought is given to the reason why.

The majority of retail salespersons, in fact, do not realize the necessity of bringing thought to bear upon their daily duties—their manner, bearing, truthfulness of statement, and personal efficiency; and only a minority leaven their work as a whole with a sincere desire to please.

§ 228. Things the Salesperson Must Refrain from Doing

The attitude of the representative on the road is positive and aggressive. He has to approach and sometimes force his offer upon the attention of buyers. The attitude of the retail salesperson, if not inactive, is distinctly more passive than that of the outside representative. The customer comes to the store; he or she expresses a wish; and the salesperson seeks to fulfill it as satisfactorily as possible.

In the cultivation of friendly relations with the buyer there are many definite and positive things which a salesman on the road can remember to practice when opportunity offers—all with the object of creating a favorable impression. In cultivating the good-will of retail customers it is more difficult to impress them with the personality of the salesperson. The first requirement on the part of salespersons is that they shall refrain from doing anything which directly or indirectly disturbs the harmonious relations of a customer with the store.

For example, every care should be taken to avoid giving offense to even the most crotchety and unreasonable customer; all customers should be treated alike regardless of their social importance as revealed by appearance or manner; no custom-

er should be urged to buy when merely looking around; no claims should be made for the goods which cannot be upheld by use or wear; and nothing should be done in word or deed which might suggest indifference and lack of that attention to which all shoppers are entitled by virtue of the patronage they bestow upon the store.

§ 229. Positive Things the Salesperson Can Do

The attitude of the salesperson need, however, by no means be entirely passive. The salesman on the road can make a favorable impression upon his customers by the geniality and sincerity of his manner. The salesperson in a store can practice the art of making the customers feel that they are welcome guests and that the person who attends to them is anxious to please.

The bright sales clerk, for example, will get close to the customers—so to speak—find out something about their tastes and preferences, and make them feel his genuine desire to assist them in every possible way.

It must not be forgotten that many people are temperamentally shy and diffident and dislike to give trouble. A valuable quality for the salesperson is the ability to put such customers at their ease so that they will take the time and trouble needed to find just what they want and just what suits them. Other persons are exacting to the verge of unreasonableness. This class may make large drafts on the salesperson's patience, but if this patience results in praise of the store it is worth the effort involved.

§ 230. The Salesperson and the Service of the Store

The modern word which sums up the art of pleasing customers is that of "Service." Service may be said to begin with the buying. This presupposes that every care is taken in the selection of goods which are sold at a price to include both

profit and the prestige and service rendered by the store. Service involves also the delivery of the goods to the customer in perfect condition, and may even go so far as to offer to exchange or refund the price of any article if it fails to give satisfaction. Between the beginning and the end of service there are many little details for the performance of which the salesperson is responsible. Unless these are attended to carefully and satisfactorily the perfection of the service as a whole suffers.

§ 231. The Goods Must Give Satisfaction

Service may thus be divided into two parts: that for which the management is responsible, and that for which the sales force is responsible.

The management is primarily responsible for the satisfaction that the goods afford. Yet the most careful buying and the utmost honesty of statement will fail in the effort to give satisfaction unless the salesperson describes the goods accurately and with equal honesty. To the best of his ability, the buyer takes every precaution not to offer anything for sale which cannot be expected to give reasonable service. But in an effort to meet competition, articles are frequently manufactured which, while of fair value for the price asked, are ill adapted for the service they are expected to render.

Especially is this the case with things which have to withstand wear and tear. The appearance and finish of such an article may fail to reveal that its quality is of a low grade. When handling wares of this kind the temptation is great, in order to make a sale, especially when the customer is doubtful of the quality, to exaggerate, if not to make statements which are the reverse of the truth. When the goods prove disappointing, as they frequently do, the customer becomes distrustful of the store, its methods on the whole are tinged with suspicion, and its good-will in consequence is injured.

A salesperson should tell the truth about the goods even if thereby a sale is lost. The actual truth will come out sooner or later.

When a customer finds that a misstatement was made at the time of purchasing a certain article the invariable result is a loss of confidence in the methods of the store when the defects of the purchase are discovered. Although a customer may refuse an article when a true description of its quality is given, at the same time confidence in the honesty of the store is increased thereby. One sale lost through honesty of statement in the present may be offset by a dozen or more made in the future because of the confidence engendered by the truth.

§ 232. The Result of Truthfulness of Statement

A lady entered a furniture store to ascertain the price of a mahogany sideboard she had seen in the window.

"What is the price?" she asked.

"Sixty dollars, Madam," replied the salesman.

"Is it solid mahogany?"

"No, Madam," promptly replied the salesman. "It would be impossible to purchase a solid mahogany sideboard at that figure. You will, however, find that the veneer is perfectly applied and cannot be detected unless examined by an expert. If handled with reasonable care this sideboard will outlast your lifetime and that of the next generation."

The lady left the store without making a purchase. Three days later she returned with a young man whom she was about to marry, and the couple selected several hundred dollars' worth of furniture. While making her purchases she told the salesman that she had tried to buy a mahogany sideboard from another dealer who had offered her one for \$75, declaring it to be solid mahogany throughout. But remembering the salesman's remark that it would be impossible to make a sideboard of solid mahogany at this price, she became suspicious and

decided to make all her purchases at the store where she could believe in the truth of the salesman's statements.

§ 233. Complaints About Unsatisfactory Goods

When an article which is guaranteed to be of good quality and of a certain kind fails to give satisfaction in rendering the service that can reasonably be expected, any complaint should be investigated and, if justifiable, promptly corrected. The policy may at times seem expensive, but experience proves that it pays because of the good-will thereby produced.

A country customer bought a handsome seasoned oak rocker by mail from a large store. In ordering, the stipulation was made for solid oak, as a strong chair was required.

Three years later a man appeared in the furniture department of this store bringing with him a parcel. He insisted upon seeing the buyer. Before saying anything he undid the parcel and revealed the end of a broken rocker.

"I bought a chair from you over three years ago," he began, "and I paid \$20 on purpose to be sure of buying one made from seasoned oak. When I buy furniture I want it to last. Now look what has happened to it! In twisting this chair around, its rocker caught a table leg and snapped off like a cornstalk."

"Why, a rocker of seasoned oak should stand any sort of an ordinary blow during your lifetime," replied the buyer as he picked it up to examine it. "This break has evidently been due to a flaw in the timber which is covered by the stain. We are sorry to have caused you this inconvenience and trouble, and if you will send the chair to us at our expense we will have it repaired and return it to you without any charge."

The result of this liberal policy, despite the three years' service the chair had given, was that the confidence of the customer who at first doubted the truth of the description of the rocker, was at once restored. Though this incident illus-

trates more an aspect of store policy than of salesmanship, it emphasizes the importance of supporting one's words with deeds and this the salesperson should always strive to do. Truthfulness of statements and a willingness to live up to them are the chief requisites for the upbuilding of that confidence without which no permanent good-will can be built up for any store.

§ 234. Superficial Study Kills Enthusiasm

In addition to being truthful in describing the goods the salesperson must put life into the description. Many clerks lack enthusiasm in their manner of describing or presenting their goods because they study them superficially and consequently have only a slight interest in them. They learn just enough to give a stereotyped sales talk. They do not study the goods intensively to discover in how many ways appeal can be made. (See Chapter XXII.)

The saleswoman who is showing a pair of gloves to a retail customer and remarks, "Just *feel* this glove! Isn't the kid beautifully soft, and isn't it a *stylish* glove too? I think it is one of the *smartest* styles we have ever sold," indicates by the enthusiasm of her manner her admiration for the merchandise she is handling. She cannot fail to arouse the same feeling in some degree in the mind of the customer.

Salespersons who lack this appreciation of the fine points of the goods because they have given them only superficial study present the sales argument in a flat and unconvincing way. They wait upon a certain number of customers a day; they explain in a methodical, but half-hearted, fashion the merits of certain goods when questioned by the customer who happens to need them; they accept an order often without so much as a "thank you"; and after the goods are wrapped they listlessly watch the customer leave the store.

Compare with the languid, apathetic type the appearance

and countenance of the salesperson who is enthusiastic; the expression is wide-awake and alert; the manner pleasing and courteous; and the whole attention is concentrated upon giving satisfaction. A store can reflect its willingness to serve and its desire to please only through its sales force. Salespeople who put the animation of quiet enthusiasm into their work benefit the house, the customer, and themselves.

§ 235. The Clerical Work of the Salesperson

A detail of the store's service for which the salesperson is responsible and to which careful attention should be paid is the clerical work attached to the sale and delivery of goods. In making the sales slips every care should be taken to obtain the customer's correct name, with the correct street address. Everything should be written clearly so that there is no possibility of making a mistake later. Delays frequently occur because of such mistakes and these acts of carelessness create an unfavorable impression.

Having made out the sales slip, accurate in every detail, the salesman should then see to the assembling and packing of the goods so far as the responsibility for these details falls upon him. To insure accuracy it is necessary to acquire the habit of concentrating while performing purely routine tasks. Mistakes, for instance, frequently occur in wrapping up parcels, and orders are sent out mixed or incomplete because the mind of the salesperson is permitted to wander to other things while engaged in the work of sorting and packing the goods.

§ 236. Acquiring the Habit of Concentration

One person handles a multiplicity of details year in and year out and a mistake rarely if ever occurs; another, with much less detail to attend to, frequently makes errors of omission and commission for which there is no excuse. The one *thinks* about the task in hand to the exclusion of other thoughts

and the work in consequence becomes much more interesting—and accurate. The mind of the other is allowed to wander with the result that only a perfunctory interest is taken in an irksome task and mistakes are the natural result.

Since much of the work of retail salespeople involves close attention to details it is important that the habit of concentration be acquired. The faculty can be developed more readily than is usually imagined if one will remember to *take an interest* in doing a particular task *just as well as it can be done*. In arranging stock let the arrangement be as perfect as possible and free from the slightest trace of untidiness; in writing out a sales slip make the figures so clear that a mistake is impossible and verify the address and the calculations so that accuracy is assured; when wrapping up a parcel try to make it as symmetrical and perfect as it can be made.

When we try to do anything as well as it can be done we take much more interest in our task and this is the secret of concentration.

§ 237. All Customers Must Be Treated Alike

An invariable rule of every well-managed store is that the same interest and courtesy should be revealed toward the customer who is shabbily dressed as to the one who is well-dressed. To jump to conclusions merely from general appearance and the style and value of the garments worn is sometimes dangerous as the following incident shows:

On a rainy morning a lady dressed in a raincoat that seemed a little the worse for wear, a hat very much under the influence of the weather, and equipped with an umbrella of nondescript character, entered a fashionable store in order to buy some lace for her daughter's wedding dress. When she reached the lace department she requested the salesperson to show her the Brussels lace she wanted. The salesgirl placed an imitation lace on the counter.

"This is not the real thing," said the customer. "This is not what I want. I asked for Brussels lace."

"Why," replied the salesgirl with a look of surprise, "that kind of lace is very expensive."

The customer without another word picked up her umbrella and made her way to the exit of the store. The manager happened to meet her as she was leaving and recognized a lady of considerable social importance. He judged by her manner that something was the matter. So he asked her if she had been properly treated.

"I have just made up my mind never to enter your store again," was the curt reply.

The case was explained, the manager was profuse in his apologies, and begged the customer to return. She was placed in charge of another saleswoman and before she left the store her purchases amounted to over \$1,000.

This illustration is typical of the treatment frequently offered to customers who fail to impress the ignorant or ill-mannered salesperson with the dignity of their appearance and their apparel. Of course, not every shabbily dressed person is a wealthy shopper in disguise. But the risk of offending a well-to-do patron whose appearance in no way indicates prosperity is much too great to permit anything but a uniform and courteous method of handling all customers alike.

§ 238. Try to Help the Customer

A man entered a hardware store and asked for a certain kind of hook to use in support of a curtain rod. The salesman who waited on him curtly replied, "We haven't any of those—don't keep them in stock," and turned away to attend to another customer.

The man entered a second store and here the salesman's reply was, "I'm sorry, we don't keep these hooks in stock because they are a special kind of hook. You can buy them only

in a store that sells curtains or curtain rods. A big department store will be the best place for you to go."

The customer followed the advice and had no trouble in procuring what he wanted. His future hardware needs were naturally supplied by the store in which the salesman had done his best to help him.

This incident illustrates the importance of doing everything possible to help a customer, even if there seems to be no possibility of deriving present or future benefit from the courtesy. When goods are being displayed, if the customer asks for advice or seems to rely upon the salesman's taste or opinion, the obvious policy is for the latter to do everything to help the customer come to a decision. When, however, a customer makes a request either for information or for something to be done which in no way relates to a possible sale, many salespersons think that it is outside their province to help or to humor a customer in this way.

§ 239. Be Patient with the Customer

Customers who are difficult to please or who cannot find just the thing they have in mind, often sorely try the patience of the salesperson. If there is one virtue more important than another for salespeople to possess in such a case, it is that of patience. Without patience they cannot give consideration and careful attention to the customer's needs, desires, or whims.

A lady bought an evening gown and an afternoon dress. She had great difficulty in making up her mind and occupied over an hour of a salesgirl's time. Two days later she returned the evening gown because she did not like its appearance in artificial light. A day later she again visited the store and asked for the saleswoman from whom she had bought the two gowns. As the salesperson came forward the customer greeted her in this way:

"You were so kind and patient with me in helping me to

select that evening gown the other day, which I found did not suit me when I tried it on at home. I now want to see whether I can find something that I like better than the afternoon dress."

With such an erratic customer as this it would have been natural to reveal some impatience but the salesgirl sweetly replied:

"I shall be very glad to show you what we have, Madam."

Thereupon a lengthy and patient search began which lasted over an hour. Before the customer left she not only decided to keep the afternoon dress, but she selected another and much more expensive evening gown in place of the one returned.

"She was so helpful," the customer exclaimed to a friend as they left the store together. "I really did not know just what kind of evening gown I wanted. But she went to so much trouble. She found something that just suited me in the end and I simply had to buy it. I shall ask for her again when I want another gown."

However inexperienced and ignorant a salesperson may be, much will be forgiven for the sake of patience and a sincere desire to help others. Helpfulness, moreover, soon becomes second nature if we look for opportunities to practice it.

The store that enjoys the reputation of employing salespeople who are uniformly courteous and desirous of helping customers, finds in this one of its biggest business assets. The salesperson who sincerely tries to please and who remembers that the likes, dislikes, and feelings of the customer must come first in consideration is the type of employee who builds up that intangible but most concrete of business assets—good-will founded on satisfaction.

CHAPTER XXII

THE KNOWLEDGE THAT GIVES BREADTH

§ 240. The Growing Importance of the Man Who Knows

The importance of knowing one's goods is now so universally recognized that no firm of any standing would send a man out prepared in the old-fashioned way—furnished merely with a grip and primed with answers to a few likely questions. Today the engagement of an outside man is never for a moment considered by manufacturers or wholesale dealers, unless he is either experienced in a firm's particular line, or unless the organization is equipped to put him through a comprehensive training course. Moreover, all department stores of the first rank and many less important retail houses now maintain schools of salesmanship. These retail houses also encourage their employees to study their goods during leisure hours, providing them with literature which describes the origin of their wares and the process of manufacture involved.

No matter whether a salesman is selling on the road or behind the counter he needs a fund of information about the goods he handles. In salesmanship ignorance is the greatest of all crimes of omission. The man who is in daily contact with certain kinds of goods and is continually handling them may at any time be asked a question about them which is quite remote from his selling task. The fact that he is in charge of their sale presupposes that he knows more about them than the average person. When he is forced to show his ignorance by such an answer as, "I don't know," he fails

to impress others as a person of intelligence and suffers in their estimation.

§ 241. Necessity of Knowledge

Much of the knowledge that is an essential part of every salesman's work is of such an obvious nature as to merit no more than passing comment. Knowledge of his goods and of the trade he represents may be taken for granted. In addition the house will furnish him with the instructions needed for making out an order and will post him regarding methods of shipment, terms of payment, house reports, and so on. This information varies, since every business has its own rules and observances. Every important concern makes a point of furnishing its representatives with fundamental information relating to the goods, the house, and their territory. To fail to do this would be as lacking in foresight as to send the soldier into the firing line without his equipment.

But in addition to the knowledge that is peculiar to his particular business there is a fund of more or less valuable information which every salesman needs to acquire, if he is to impress his customers as a person of more than average intelligence and education. The higher rungs of the ladder of salesmanship can be attained only by the men who have this intelligence. To succeed in any walk of life a man must first have ability and character; but though he possesses both in a high degree, he will be outstripped in the race for success by the man who in addition to character and ability also *knows*. The man who knows must have made a conscious effort to acquire his knowledge.

§ 242. Know Your House and Its History

First on the list, if not first in importance, in every salesman's store of information is a knowledge of the history, the policy, and the personnel of the house he represents.

A wholesale salesman employed by a large corporation has been known to set out not knowing even the name of its president. This was of course a careless lack of preparation. Every salesman should learn the history of his firm, the names of its personnel, what the different departments are, their relations to each other, the names of the heads of the different departments, and so on. He is constantly meeting people who are acquainted with or have had previous dealings with the house. When they mention the name of someone connected with it, or an important fact about its history with which the salesman is unfamiliar, he is placed in an embarrassing position.

§ 243. Knowledge of Processes of Manufacture

In the sale of certain products a knowledge of the processes of manufacture is essential. In such cases representatives are not permitted to approach customers until they have served an apprenticeship in the factory, frequently receiving a preliminary training in every department of the business before they are sent out to sell. Salesmen who rise high in their calling are invariably those who, in addition to a carefully cultivated aptitude for selling goods, have acquired technical knowledge which equips them to meet on an equal footing the technically educated buyer. A salesman who wishes to advance rapidly is well advised to combine with his knowledge of salesmanship the study of a technical subject. This combination will insure a much more lucrative position if the knowledge relates to a prosperous and commanding trade.

§ 244. The Expert Knowledge Demanded by a Motor Truck Concern

A well-known motor truck house insists that its salesmen study the technicalities of haulage and construction—not because this knowledge is needed as part of a sales talk,

but because it is useful in order to obtain maximum results in sales. Motor trucks are frequently sold to men in possession of a technical knowledge of their construction, who have given close study to the subject of efficient haulage. The salesman must be ready to meet and to sell to these technically trained minds. Long hauls, short hauls, constant loads, varying loads, hilly country, city traffic, and a hundred and one other considerations all enter into the choice of a commercial vehicle. The man who is about to invest in an expensive battery of motor trucks has to be shown how he can get the most for his money, and this means that the salesman must be familiar with all the intricate workings of a delivery or transportation system.

§ 245. School of Salesmanship for Specialty Selling

Certain specialty houses which rely largely on the efforts of salesmen and whose specialty is a more or less complicated product, maintain schools of salesmanship in which every budding representative is carefully trained in the art of demonstrating his specialty and in answering the objections of buyers. If, for example, a piece of mechanism or an office appliance needs to be explained, the salesman must study and handle it until he thoroughly grasps its working. He is drilled in the demonstration of the product until he is familiar with its every detail.

This preparatory work is often carried a degree further. A class of instruction is formed and each salesman in turn has to make a demonstration sale while the instructor or one of the pupils acts as the customer. The value of this drill cannot be overestimated. The salesman works under the critical eye of a dozen or more onlookers, all of whom are ready to point out his weaknesses and to correct his mannerisms of voice or bearing.

When the man selling a specialty has no opportunity of

going through a comprehensive course of instruction he will be well advised to deliver his sales talk and make an actual demonstration of his methods to his friends with a view to friendly criticism and the eradication of defects in his method or in his address.

§ 246. Special Knowledge of Goods

Before considering the general fund of knowledge which every salesman should possess, let us consider what should be his special knowledge of his goods other than that which is furnished him by the house he represents. He must of course be familiar with prices and be able to quote them without referring to a price book unless there are hundreds of different items on his list. This information wins the buyer's respect and is the first distinguishing mark of the expert. He should also be able to explain fully what his goods will do—whether performances relate to service, durability, or any other striking record. Instances of customers with well-known names who have bought the product and secured good results from it are also useful knowledge.

One typewriter salesman, for example, makes a point of memorizing the time of various speed contests in which his machine has won prizes at mercantile exhibitions. He uses this information, which at first view does not seem to be of much interest or value to a business man, in order to *prove* the truth of his statements about the reliability of his machine.

In the same way the automobile salesman is usually familiar with the cost of operation and superiority of certain points of construction in the car he handles and he also has at his finger ends instances of long service secured by users of the car.

Facts such as these, although they may not be useful in every sale, will sooner or later prove their value in a particular case.

§ 247. The Special Knowledge of the Expert

Much more than a knowledge of grades and prices and a perfect acquaintance with the talking points of one's goods is desirable when selling certain materials for manufacturing purposes. A successful cotton salesman, for example, has built up for himself such a reputation as an expert that all the business he can take care of comes to him over the telephone. Customers know that his judgment as to the fitness of various kinds of cotton for certain work is to be relied upon. When he advises them to buy because the price is likely to advance, they act upon his suggestion. He is constantly being referred to because of his knowledge of statistics in the cotton market. He knows what affects the quality of cotton and the advantages of one kind over another for every process of manufacture. If a customer tells him for what purpose the cotton is needed his judgment as to the kind best suited for the purpose can be relied on. Years of patient study combined with observation carried on with the minuteness of analysis has made him an expert in the cotton trade.

A rubber salesman attributes his success to his all-around knowledge of the industry. He can unerringly appraise the value of any goods by the use of a pocket magnifying glass. He knows the market conditions of all ingredients used in the manufacture of the product he handles, so that he can estimate the effect on prices of a rise or fall in the price of sulphur or some other material used in rubber manufacture.

The really big, successful salesmen of raw supplies are actually market and produce experts. Manufacturers, and to a less extent retailers, buy their judgment and knowledge when they buy the goods they have to offer. A salesman whose knowledge of the industry with which he is connected is deficient in any way is sharply limited in his earning power and almost certainly fails to rise to an executive position of any importance.

§ 248. Knowledge of Competing Goods

The study of any industry must also include a knowledge of rival firms and their goods. A careful study of competing goods and methods enables the salesman to compare his own merchandise and methods with those of competitors. When a favorable comparison can be made diplomatically, he can bring out adequately the strong points of his own line. When he notes competing goods or methods that are superior to his own, part of his duty is to call the attention of his firm to the matter with a view to the improvement of its methods. Many valuable suggestions of this kind are frequently received from salesmen, and obviously the man who is most likely to make them is the man who is always studying and learning.

The comprehensive knowledge referred to in preceding sections is less vital in the sale of certain specialties where the element of competition is not to be feared. For instance, the adding machine salesman does not need to be equipped with a knowledge of factory processes and sources of raw materials; but he must be thoroughly familiar with every possible use of his device; he must be able to show the prospect how to derive the most benefit from its employment; and he must be acquainted with the limitations of competing devices.

An adding machine salesman, when requesting an interview for the purpose of demonstrating his machine, was met with the statement that the firm approached was considering the purchase of a certain make of typewriter to which an adding mechanism is attached. Not being familiar with this office device, the salesman was completely nonplused and was unable to point out why his own machine should be bought in preference to the combination device.

§ 249. Knowledge for the Retail Salesperson

Among retail salespeople lack of knowledge of the goods is unfortunately the general rule. Of course it is hardly prac-

ticable for them to have the thorough acquaintance with the various articles they handle which is usually possessed by the wholesale salesman, since the latter has probably spent years in studying his line and learning everything of value about it. But the clerk who is interested and wishes to succeed in his work is anxious to acquire something more than a superficial knowledge of the merchandise he handles. As emphasized in Chapter XXI, he should be in a position to answer every probable question and should always be able to volunteer information as to why one kind of article is preferable to another for a given purpose.

§ 250. Sources of Information

Useful technical information can be gained by the study of manufacturers' advertisements in trade and other magazines, by reading the booklets which many large concerns publish about manufacturing processes and methods, and by talking with the salesmen who call at the store. The representative of the manufacturer is usually willing and glad to give information about the goods he handles to the retail salesman who is sufficiently interested to ask for it.

Another convenient source of information regarding the manufacture of almost any product is an encyclopedia. The salesman who is keenly anxious to take an intelligent interest in his merchandise cannot do better than to build up a fundamental groundwork of information by studying this valuable reference work from time to time. If he wishes to go deeper into the study of a technical subject, a public library will as a rule offer him an assortment of books which will describe in greater detail every phase of manufacture and production. The retail clerk should bear in mind that if, in addition to proving his ability as a salesman, he combines with this a comprehensive knowledge of certain kinds of goods, he is just the type of man every manufacturer of these particular lines

is in search of when in need of recruits for his own sales force. Some of the most successful salesmen on the road have risen from the ranks of retail salesmen primarily through their broad knowledge of the goods they handle.

§ 251. The Acquirement of Knowledge is Always Worth While

A young salesman in charge of a sporting goods store became interested in firearms and began to study the history of their development. The more he studied, the more fascinated with the subject he became.

It may here be parenthetically remarked that one can begin the study of anything with the feeling that the task is irksome and disagreeable in the extreme. But little by little as one acquires knowledge the task becomes less and less irksome until the study of a subject which formerly proved tedious and required a strong effort of will becomes a positive pleasure and delight.

The salesman soon began to collect old arms and weapons, and he never lost an opportunity to study the mechanism of modern guns and firearms. Such eventually became his enthusiasm that for an hour or two he could narrate facts and details about his specialty which were intensely interesting to the uninitiated listener.

One day he chanced to broach his pet subject to a customer, who remained listening to him for over an hour in the store. At the close of the interview the customer asked the salesman if he would be willing to talk on the subject of firearms at a forthcoming church club meeting. Consent was gladly given, though the salesman was a little diffident as to his ability to interest an audience for any length of time.

Much to his surprise the talk, which was illustrated with lantern slides, proved highly successful and led to several other invitations to speak on the same subject. A manufac-

turer of sporting rifles and ammunition heard of this young retail salesman who so thoroughly knew his goods and invited him to the factory. Impressed with the salesman's knowledge and the clearness with which he expressed himself, the manufacturer offered him a position in the factory with the prospect of becoming assistant sales manager. The offer was promptly accepted. Today that salesman is drawing \$10,000 a year as sales manager of a big concern.

Sooner or later the man who takes the trouble to acquire more than the average knowledge about his business finds bigger responsibilities thrust upon him. The salesman who fails to learn because he sees no opportunity to use the knowledge which he might acquire, or who studies only because such knowledge is essential in his every-day work, remains in the ranks of mediocrity.

§ 252. The Retail Salesman Must Know His Stock

To turn from the general to the particular, the fact hardly seems to need emphasis that a retail salesman must have a thorough knowledge of his stock. Yet in every big department store, when something is asked for that is a little out of the way or in little demand, one is frequently confronted with a perplexed salesperson, who is not quite sure whether that particular thing is carried in stock, and replies, "I must ask the buyer." Salespeople of this type do not utilize their spare moments profitably by studying and arranging their stock. In some cases they do not always know the different styles and sizes of goods nor can they place their hands on them immediately when wanted. A demand for a certain article may necessitate an embarrassing search through the shelves. The salesperson who lacks the small amount of interest to learn thoroughly the kinds and sizes of the stock on hand will rarely develop that additional interest which leads to a store of interesting and exceptional knowledge.

§ 253. Knowledge Helps to Make Sales Talk Interesting

The more interestingly a salesman can talk about his goods, the easier it becomes to turn the customer's interest into desire. A fund of interesting facts is to be found in the history of every product. The furniture salesman who knows whence such names as Adams, Puritan, Colonial, Chippendale, Sheraton, and Mission are derived and what they stand for, and who can detect the spurious and the sham, is obviously of much greater value to his employer, and has a much greater chance of rising to an executive position, than the man whose knowledge is limited to the fact that a certain pattern is of such and such a wood and style and sells for a certain price. The furniture trade affords an opportunity for the study of art in one of its most attractive forms. The salesman might supplement his knowledge of furniture by the study of decoration, wall papers, color schemes, paints, varnishes, and everything incidental to the embellishment and decoration of the home. From the simple beginning of studying different styles of furniture to a fund of knowledge sufficiently complete to build up a reputation as an expert in interior decoration may seem a far cry; but the salesman who utilizes his spare moments and leisure hours for the acquirement of knowledge of this kind will find it a most fascinating and absorbing study. The man who becomes absorbed in any study soon becomes an expert.

What applies to furniture is applicable to the sale of every other product which is of sufficient dignity and importance to need the services of intelligent salesmanship.

§ 254. The Use of Eyes and Ears in Acquiring Knowledge

The emphasis so far laid upon study as a means of acquiring knowledge may create an erroneous impression. While the acquirement of information that is stored in the pages of books or periodicals is important, one must not overlook

the fact that the eyes and ears are useful teachers. The salesman on the road, for instance, is constantly meeting interesting people who have valuable information to impart. The opportunity is always present, if he is alert, to pick up new ideas, from either his own or another trade, which with a little adaptation can be utilized by his house; or if his own house cannot profit from the ideas its customers will probably be able to do so.

The salesman who keeps his eyes and ears open in order to find out and study how the most successful men in his trade carry on their business is frequently able to give his customers advice and suggestions that are of real value. He learns, for example, of a successful selling plan used in one store, a time-saving accounting system in another, or the successful advertising of a third. He takes careful note of the matter and then he passes on this information to those customers whom he thinks most able to utilize it.

§ 255. Summary

No matter in what capacity a man may be employed, his special knowledge can never be accurate and complete enough nor his general knowledge too extensive. The salesman's work necessitates meeting both the expert who knows all that is to be known about a particular subject and people who will talk to him on matters of general interest or discuss with him current events. We all like to be able to show an intelligent interest in any general subject and to have at least some acquaintance with the principles of the arts and the elementary facts relating to the sciences. The acquirement of such knowledge as this is not, of course, a peculiar requisite of a salesman, but it is advantageous for any man who earns his living by means of his brain. The salesman more than most men, however, needs to round out his expert knowledge with a fund of general information.

CHAPTER XXIII

SELLING AT WHOLESALE ILLUSTRATED

§ 256. Introduction

Now that the advice relating to the study of any sales proposition and its practical application in the school of experience has been completed, this counsel can with advantage be summarized and presented in graphic form in a series of imaginary interviews or specimen selling talks.

At the first reading of the rules and principles laid down in this work a certain degree of bewilderment may be felt as to how so much counsel is to be practically applied. It will, however, help and encourage the student if he remembers that the art of salesmanship is in many respects analogous to the art of the actor. The performance of an amateur actor or of a professional who is new to the stage is as a rule crude, unpolished, and ineffective compared with that of the skilled professional. A professional actor develops his skill and finish through careful study of his lines and through attention to a multiplicity of detail in voice, manner, and gesture. The final result is a polished and convincing performance, which though lifelike in every respect, is still largely carried out automatically and without conscious effort.

The same observations apply to the study and practice of salesmanship. Like the finished actor the salesman must first learn his lines. His talk indeed is more inclusive than that of the actor, because in most cases he must be his own playwright. When he has thoroughly memorized his speech—or rather his speeches, as explained in Chapter IV, he must

constantly seek to embody in practice day by day what he assiduously learns by study. In time the practice of what at first requires an effort of will and of memory will become automatic, so that it is done naturally and without conscious effort.

The sales talks in this and the following chapters show the co-ordination of the different parts of the sale from the introduction to the close, as already discussed. In each instance it is assumed that the salesman has made a careful preapproach. The interviews are based on actual sales which have come within the author's experience and all embody the principles laid down in this book, however the conversation may seem to evolve naturally from environment and from context.

§ 257. Characters and Setting

Let us assume that the salesman represents the Line Cutlery Company, a small but growing concern making a line of high-grade table and pocket cutlery. He calls on a retail hardwareman, Mr. Brown, a nervous, fussy person of forty-five, who though narrow-gauged believes himself to be quite an important man. A distinguishing trait is that he gets "rattled" easily, especially if called on to do two things at the same time. His business is large enough to support two assistants. He has a little cubby-hole of an office at the end of the store to which he has retired when the salesman calls at the store at 10:30 on a Monday morning. Three salesmen have already seen Mr. Brown, with varying fortune.

With this setting we will proceed to develop the sales talk. The salesman enters cheerfully.

SALESMAN. [*To one of the assistants.*] Good morning! How are you? [*Looks up store.*] I see Mr. Brown is in his office. Is he very busy this morning?

ASSISTANT. About as usual. Who shall I tell him is here?

SALESMAN. I represent the Line Cutlery Company, but don't bother to tell him. I'll wait till he comes out. I know *I* don't like to be disturbed in the middle of a job. [*Assistant goes on with his work and salesman strolls up to the cutlery case and looks it over carefully. He then leisurely strolls back to assistant and says in casual tones.*] You have a good display of cutlery there. Kept in mighty good condition by someone. Who looks after it?

ASSISTANT. We all have a whack at it, but I'm supposed to look after it.

SALESMAN. I notice the majority of goods there are a good medium-class quality. I suppose you keep the best ones under cover?

ASSISTANT. No, you see we don't sell much of the high-priced stuff.

SALESMAN. That's too bad. The high-grade goods please the folks best in the long run—and they pay a real profit. Does Mr. Brown stay in his office much of the time?

ASSISTANT. No, he's on the floor most of the time. I'll tell him you're here if you like.

SALESMAN. No, thanks, I'm not pressed for time.

[*He strolls away and catching the eye of the other assistant smiles genially and gives a half wave of greeting. Then he returns to his inspection of the cutlery case.*

In a few minutes Brown leaves his office and walks behind the counter down the store.]

DEALER. [*On seeing the salesman he approaches him.*] Anyone waiting on you?

SALESMAN. No, Mr. Brown, I was waiting for you. I represent the Line Cutlery Company and have a few rather unusual lines to show you that I think you will appreciate.

DEALER. I placed an order only last week, so am well taken care of at present.

SALESMAN. Well, it's a good time to buy with prices sky-highing like they are. Did you have any difficulty in placing an order for future delivery at today's prices?

DEALER. I bought only for immediate shipment. I don't believe in tying myself up with future shipments. Now I must ask you to excuse me—you know what Monday is.

SALESMAN. I expect Monday is one of the busiest days of the week, isn't it, Mr. Brown? I know I always have to cut short on time on Mondays. [*The telephone bell rings.*]

DEALER. I must answer the phone. Good day! Some other time perhaps. [*He goes to his office. Salesman stays by the show case and takes out of his pocket a "picnic set" of knife, fork, and spoon in a neat leather case. In a minute Brown returns and says petulantly.*] I can't do anything for you this trip, so won't detain you any longer.

SALESMAN. All right, Mr. Brown. I'll have to hope for better luck next time. By the way, I ought not to leave without letting you see this profitable novelty. [*Passes over the set which he has partly taken from the case.*]

DEALER. [*Reluctantly takes it, looks at it dubiously, and then says.*] Yes, good article, but it wouldn't interest me this time. [*Passes it to salesman, who, however, "doesn't see" it, so buyer leaves it on the sales counter.*]

SALESMAN. It's quite a big seller for some reason or other. Did you notice the new rosewood handle and our patent way of fixing so that handle and blade can never part company?

DEALER. [*Picking up the sample again with a little more curiosity.*] What does it cost?

SALESMAN. It depends on the finish, Mr. Brown. There are five styles. [*Opens grip and places several articles*

on the counter, then brings out the other styles in "picnic sets" and his catalogue. He quickly spreads a strip of plain dark blue velvet on the case and lays the four "picnic sets" on it.] There, Mr. Brown, they will tell you what they are better than I. [*Places two by themselves.*] These are two very popular numbers. We get lots of repeats for them. The light-handle sets sell for 50 cents and cost \$3.50 a dozen; the dark-handle set sells for \$1 and costs you \$7.50 a dozen. Carriage forward, of course, 2 per cent discount 10 days. The profit to you on three dozen of each is \$21. The discount about pays the carriage. Quite a handsome profit for such a smart salable novelty, isn't it, Mr. Brown?

DEALER. Yes, the profit's all right, but I don't think I'm interested—excuse me. [*Leaves salesman to wait on customer; while doing this a case of goods is delivered. Brown gets excited because teamster left box in wrong place. After serving customer returns hurriedly.*] Can't give you any more time now! Must see to that case!

SALESMAN. [*Following him up.*] I'm pretty husky, Mr. Brown, better let me help you, before I go. The boys are both busy with customers I see. [*Dealer grudgingly accepts the help.*] There! That's well out of the way. Now, I'll look after my samples. [*Walks towards them; dealer follows. Salesman drops the three picnic set samples not discussed into his grip as if intending to go. Then picking up a card of assorted kitchen knives puts them half into his grip when, as if by afterthought, places them before the buyer.*] That's a job line—60 cents a card—twelve on a card—sell at ten cents each. Of course, at that price we'll clear out what we have left this week. [*Casually.*] Quite a bargain, don't you think?

DEALER. [*Picks up card interestedly.*] All the assortments the same as this?

SALESMAN. [*Apparently arranging his samples in his grip.*]
 Yes, Mr. Brown. All good clean stock too. We can't duplicate them. Firm that made them gone out of business, so we want to move 'em quickly—hence the low price.

DEALER. That's a good line, but it isn't worth sending by itself so I'll pass it up. It's not a bad line though. I've always bought my kitchen knives and that sort of goods from Ex and Bee, but somehow was never quite satisfied with them. What kind of a house are they?

SALESMAN. Good people, Mr. Brown, turn out a reliable line. By the way, I'd like to get your opinion on our carving sets. I know you can tell a good article when you see it. [*Opens a leather-covered case that is still on the show case, and displays a handsome stag-handle carving set.*]

DEALER. My! Those are nice. I wish I could sell goods as good as that, but they are a poor lot round here. How much are they?

SALESMAN. How much do you think?

DEALER. [*Pursing his lips and looking wise.*] Well, I should say about—that, let me see—\$8?

SALESMAN. You certainly valued very near, Mr. Brown. They cost you \$7.30—just 70 cents less than you said. I believe they would retail for \$12. You've studied cutlery, haven't you?

DEALER. [*Casually, though evidently pleased.*] Oh, I know a little about it.

SALESMAN. What's the best quality you sell now?

DEALER. The best I carry retails at \$6. I wouldn't dare keep anything better.

SALESMAN. Why not?

DEALER. Haven't got enough wealthy people in town.

SALESMAN. You have quite a good middle-class population I understand. Not many really wealthy people as you

say. But, Mr. Brown, it doesn't require wealth to buy good table cutlery. *We* find an increasing demand for "something better" all the time. The solid citizen—like you have here—is willing to pay a fair price for a good article and, as you know, we have a reputation for high quality.

DEALER. Let's see, what is the name of your firm?

SALESMAN. The Line Cutlery Company.

DEALER. Never even heard of 'em.

SALESMAN. Ever heard of Frank Mills Company?

DEALER. No.

SALESMAN. Well, they are one of the largest Sheffield, England, makers of high-quality cutlery. If you've never heard of them after they've been in business over a hundred years, it's not surprising you don't know us, who have been in existence only four years. But you could hardly be expected to know of us for until recently we dealt in lines of goods a little too high-priced for you. We are really to blame for not telling you our story sooner, but Mr. Line, the president of our company, would not hire a salesman until he had a complete line of goods that were unexcelled for quality, durability, and appearance. Just look at the beautiful finish on these shears. [*Rolls out a cloth containing them.*—as bright and clean as a hound's tooth. Worth waiting for a line like this, isn't it, Mr. Brown?

DEALER. Yes, but too high-priced for us.

SALESMAN. Mr. Brown, the average householder is looking for reliability more than ever. Offer them the *best* and you'll please the most fastidious as well as the every-day customer. May I send you our new price-list?

DEALER. Yes, send me a catalogue.

SALESMAN. Give me a letter-head with the address in full and I'll attend to it with pleasure. [*Places one or two*

articles in grip. Dealer again picks up the card of kitchen knives, looks at them for a moment, and puts them down again.] Mr. Brown, you'd better let me send you some of these job kitchen knives. They can be sent with the catalogue. How would a gross be?

DEALER. No, I think not, you might send six dozen if you wish to.

SALESMAN. Gladly, Mr. Brown, even a little order is very welcome. We've never done business with you before, so the firm will be delighted to have your name on our books.

DEALER. Yes? Well! I guess I can show as good a credit as most people. Let me see. Those knives are 60 cents a dozen? [*Salesman nods head.*] That's only \$3.60. It's really not worth bothering with. Guess I'll pass them up this trip.

SALESMAN. These with a few of the "picnic sets" would make a handy express package. Why not let me put you down for three dozen of each?

DEALER. No. I wouldn't mind having one dozen of each.

SALESMAN. Good. Now, I know you are a busy man so won't keep you longer. Perhaps, however, we could look hurriedly over the catalogue and see if by any chance there is anything else that interests you. [*Showing the catalogue leads to a few additions to the order. Before the salesman is half way through, more customers come in and the dealer is busy for ten minutes. The salesman seeing that the dealer is getting nervous, packs his grip, and says.*] Good day, Mr. Brown, hope to see you again in two months. [*Leaves. He writes the dealer the next day and thanks him for the order.*]

CHAPTER XXIV

A SPECIALTY SALE ILLUSTRATED

§ 258. Introduction

Life insurance presents one of the most difficult of all sales problems to tackle. It demands courage and resource, pertinacity allied with strongly developed reasoning powers. The outlay involved is often a serious expenditure which requires careful consideration before the responsibility is incurred. The salesman works at a disadvantage because he can neither show samples nor promise an immediate return in profit. The sales talk, or at least its opening, must often be delivered to a prospect who is barely civil. The presentation, therefore, of a specimen selling talk which depicts the sale of life insurance is both interesting and helpful.

§ 259. Characters and Setting

In the case taken for illustration the prospect, James Hartley, is a manufacturer of rolled gold jewelry with a small business. He is a young man of twenty-six, married, no family, has been in business three years and is very successful. He is a man of some social importance, belonging to all the clubs in town; has an artistic temperament and is especially fond of flowers and good music. He is fastidious in his person and affects a rather bored and sarcastic manner toward strangers. He is keen, very logical, and also scrupulously fair in business dealings.

Having discovered the above data about his prospect, the salesman decides that any morning, except Saturday, between

10:30 and 11:30, will be the best time for his purpose. At 10:30 on a Tuesday morning he goes to the factory and asks the girl at the information window which is Mr. Hartley's office.

GIRL. His office is through here, but you can't go in unless you have an appointment.

SALESMAN. No, I've no appointment, but I think he'll be glad I called.

GIRL. If you have a card I'll take it to Mr. Hartley.

SALESMAN. I never carry them, but if you'll just say that Mr. Harry Brown is here, it will be sufficient.

GIRL. Does he know your business? What do you want to see him about?

SALESMAN. It's a personal matter—nothing to do with the business.

GIRL. He's very busy, but I'll see what he says. [*Goes to Hartley's private office and in a few moments returns and says.*] Have you an appointment with Mr. Hartley?

SALESMAN. No, I did not bother to make one, as I wished to see him only about ten minutes; as it was not in connection with his business I thought it better not to do so.

GIRL. Well, Mr. Hartley is very busy, but if you'll tell me what you want to see him about I'll see if he will give you a few minutes of his time.

SALESMAN. I'll give you a message for him then, if you think it best. Thank you for the suggestion. [*Writes on a small sheet of plain paper, "Can you give me ten minutes now? If not, when is the best time you can see me—here, I mean, not at the club. H. Brown."*] I'll appreciate it if you'll give him this—don't bother to put it in an envelope.

GIRL. [*Again disappears in Hartley's office. On her*

return she says.] Mr. Hartley is very busy, but if it is important and you care to wait he'll see you as soon as he is at liberty.

SALESMAN. Thank you for your trouble. I'll wait. [*A minute's silence.*] What a remarkable success Mr. Hartley is making in his business! Have you been with him since he started?

GIRL. No, I've been here only a year.

SALESMAN. That's quite a good time Has he a very important conference on? I don't want to hurry him if he has.

GIRL. No. I don't think he'll be long. I know he has an appointment outside at 11:30. [*Silence for a few minutes when a buzzer sounds. The girl gets up.*] I expect Mr. Hartley is at liberty. [*She goes to his office and returns.*] He will give you a few minutes now.

SALESMAN. Much obliged. How is he today? *Very* rushed with work or is he taking things easy?

GIRL. About as usual.

SALESMAN. [*Enters Hartley's office. He places his hat on a chair near the door and walks toward Hartley's desk, at which he is writing.*] Good morning, Mr. Hartley. [*He makes a slight motion as if to offer to shake hands, but as Hartley continues writing he turns it into a motion of adjusting his necktie.*]

HARTLEY. Good morning. [*He continues writing, while salesman stands a short distance from the desk.*] Well? You wished to see me?

SALESMAN. When you are at liberty, Mr. Hartley.

HARTLEY. Go ahead, I can hear you while I write.

SALESMAN. My talking would distract you somewhat from your writing, or else the writing would keep your thoughts from me.

HARTLEY. I'll take a chance of that.

SALESMAN. Frankly, Mr. Hartley, I won't. My mission is either with all your time or none.

HARTLEY. Well, my friend, I did not ask you to call, did I?

SALESMAN. No, Mr. Hartley, but you offered to see me and invited me in here to explain my mission.

HARTLEY. [*Continues writing in silence for a few seconds, then puts his fountain pen on the desk.*] Well, I'm through. Possibly you'll consent to tell your story now—only please make it brief. [*Looks at watch.*] I've an appointment soon.

SALESMAN. I'll keep right to business. [*Walks to desk and stands by Hartley, who has to look up to him to see his face.*] Mr. Hartley, I'll keep within my ten minutes, but I want you to listen carefully to my suggestion until I'm through.

You have been very successful, and doubtless will be more so. You are a young man to carry such a prosperous business which your own individuality and hard work has created. Should anything happen to you, which probably will *not* of course, your business would quite possibly go to pieces. It has not been established long enough to be independent of you and your manager may or may not understand your policies sufficiently to take hold and run the business.

HARTLEY. Really—you seem to be quite interested in my business!

SALESMAN. I am. I'm interested in any business that gives me a chance to help it and my company at the same time.

HARTLEY. And what, pray, is your company?

SALESMAN. The Zenith Life Insurance Company.

HARTLEY. [*Looking salesman up and down.*] So, you're a life insurance agent, are you? Well, don't let me de-

tain you. I'm not at all interested. [*Reaches to push a bell button.*]

SALESMAN. Wait, Mr. Hartley, you promised me ten minutes. I've not had half of it yet.

HARTLEY. [*Hesitates for a minute, then evidently his sense of fair play wins.*] All right, if you can waste a few minutes, I guess I can. [*Half hides a simulated yawn.*] Better sit down while you are about it.

SALESMAN. Thank you. [*Draws chair near desk and sits.*] Mr. Hartley, you said I was a life insurance agent. I am and proud of it and of representing the Zenith. It isn't every salesman who has a chance to represent a \$30,000,000 concern. Here is my proposition. I suggest you take out two policies. A five-year term policy for \$25,000 and the other a \$25,000 twenty-year life policy. The

HARTLEY. Can't you suggest one or two more?

SALESMAN. I could, but I would not be considering your interests if I did.

HARTLEY. I see. You're a philanthropist!

SALESMAN. I'm a business man. If I have a service that is valuable to you, you want to buy it. Your own salesmen sell goods that their customers will be able to sell. You know that you'd be out of business in six months if they didn't. I suggest policies to you that I believe will be most valuable to you for similar reasons.

HARTLEY. Well, tell me why.

SALESMAN. The term policy is the cheapest form of insurance, you pay merely for protection. This costs you only \$—— a year, quite a nominal sum. Yet, should you die within the five-year period, your estate gets \$25,000 cash. This money would enable the business to tide over the slump your death would cause and until a new management or organization was formed. Very small sum to

pay for such protection, isn't it? [*Hartley half nods in agreement.*] The other policy is both insurance and investment. In twenty years' time you have an investment of \$25,000. After the third year the policy has a cash value which increases year by year. If ever you need money for expansion and to tide over depression, this investment can be borrowed on.

HARTLEY. That sounds all right, but if I want money my bank will loan it to me. As a matter of fact I have ample funds for development.

SALESMAN. That's fine, but you know that a rapidly growing business like yours can quickly outstrip its resources. See how rapidly some of our gigantic enterprises have grown and how frequently they have to reorganize on a larger scale to keep pace with their financial needs.

HARTLEY. If mine grows with such amazing rapidity I guess a life insurance policy won't meet its needs.

SALESMAN. No indeed, but it can help tide over, as it were. Another thing—in time of depression like we had in 1907, your business would almost cease. Who buys such luxuries as jewelry, etc., then? The banks won't loan on future prospects under these conditions. Your name means too much to you to take chances with it. A man who is so well-known as you are has to be doubly careful. [*A street hand-organ begins playing the latest rag-time craze.*] What an atrocity that is! There is so much fine music they could play—and then to choose that!

HARTLEY. I agree with you there. That rubbish grates on my nerves.

SALESMAN. I don't wonder at it. Talking of music, have you heard that wonderful new contralto [*A discussion of music follows in which Hartley is undisguisedly interested. Salesman finds it difficult to reintroduce*

insurance and finally does so by saying.] Mr. Hartley, I've had my ten minutes. I've plenty of time, of course, but I won't take more than asked for without your permission. My suggestion in a nutshell is [*States the amount of yearly premium, putting the figures on paper and passing them to Hartley. Here he briefly reviews it, emphasizing the need for protecting a young business.*] Is there any suggestion there that is not in your interest?

HARTLEY. No, but I wouldn't buy without thinking it over very carefully. That's only your suggestion, you know, and I think I know what's best for me.

SALESMAN. Who knows your goods best? Your salesmen or their customers? Your salesmen of course. And are they not best able to advise their customers on what to buy? That is my attitude in respect to insurance. I act as an insurance expert to many of your friends. Mr. Mark of the Provident Trust Company, Rogers of the Kiln Lumber Co. [*Names a few others—prominent names and all members of some club and all known to Hartley.*]*]*—all are clients of mine.

HARTLEY. So? Well, I'll be my own insurance expert. Now I'll bid you good day. [*Rises.*]

SALESMAN. That's one thing you cannot possibly be. You can't buy insurance like butter or jewelry.

HARTLEY. Is that so? Nevertheless, I'll decide when and what I want without expert advice.

SALESMAN. [*Giving Hartley no chance to dismiss him.*] I knew a man once who tried to be his own plumber when the pipes froze. After the stairs were flooded and a ceiling fell down he called for expert help. If you're sick, do you doctor yourself or call in a physician? Do you look after legal matters or do you leave them to your lawyer? Insurance is in the same category. Besides.

as I said before, you cannot possibly be your own insurance expert.

HARTLEY. And why not?

SALESMAN. Because you cannot say whether or not you are eligible. You may decide to take a certain kind of policy and then find no company can insure you because of your physical condition.

HARTLEY. Oh well, I can easily have my doctor examine me and ascertain that.

SALESMAN. No need to pay your doctor to do it—besides, even his examination would not be accepted by the company. The Zenith's own physical examiner must report favorably on you before the risk is accepted—and you would be astonished at the number of supposedly healthy men who are declined.

HARTLEY. Perhaps you are right, but I'll not do anything about it now. You can call again after Christmas.

SALESMAN. And suppose you die in the meantime?

HARTLEY. I'll take my chances on that.

SALESMAN. It's your wife's chances you take, not your own. There are thousands of widows working hard to make a bare existence, who are living examples of "he took a chance—my chance." No, Mr. Hartley, if you need insurance you need it now more than later. However, perhaps, I'm wasting your time. Perhaps you cannot pass the physical test. Before considering any kind of policy you had better let the doctor look you over and then, if his report is satisfactory, the advisability or otherwise of certain policies can be decided. Suppose I bring the doctor here tomorrow morning about this time and let him look you over?

HARTLEY. But even if I did see the doctor I would not promise to insure with you. I have some friends in the business and I should want to give them a chance.

SALESMAN. Unless they could give you something better than I can, you would let me be your insurance broker?

HARTLEY. Yes, that is if I ever decide to insure at all.

SALESMAN. That's all anyone could expect, Mr. Hartley. Let's first find out if you are insurable, so how will 10:30 tomorrow be to let the doctor find out?

HARTLEY. Very well, but remember, you do this on your own responsibility.

SALESMAN. That is quite understood. Now, I'll bid you good day. [*Hartley offers him a cigar, they both "light up," shake hands, and the salesman leaves, having gained all he planned to secure at that interview.*]

CHAPTER XXV

A RETAIL SALE ILLUSTRATED

§ 260. Introduction

The following dialogue illustrates the importance of a knowledge of the goods in making a retail sale of any moment. Like the talks already given it is based on an actual sale. The situation here presented is one that may arise in the department of any store during the course of a week's work. The salesman's method of handling his customers can be studied with advantage by every retail salesperson. Tact is no less a prerequisite to success in selling at retail than it is to success in selling on the road.

§ 261. Characters and Setting

The sale takes place in the rug department of a department store. A man and two women enter. Smith is rather vacant looking, thinks he is funny, and laughs at his own jokes. His wife is a stolid, slow-moving, and slow-thinking woman, who is apparently fond of her husband and admires his "humor." The other woman, Miss Brown, is a sister of Mrs. Smith. She evidently dislikes the husband and is very fond of her sister, who returns her affection. Miss Brown is tall, thin, angular, and makes a practice of disagreeing with everything Smith says.

The salesman sees these three enter. After a moment's pause he approaches them and, with a comprehensive glance that includes all three, says:

SALESMAN. Good morning!

MRS. SMITH. I want to look at some rugs.

SALESMAN. Yes, Madam, for which room did you want them?

MRS. SMITH. Well, I wanted something that I might use in either the living room or the dining room.

MR. SMITH. Why not in the mushroom? [*Laughs with Mrs. Smith; Miss Brown sniffs; salesman smiles.*]

SALESMAN. [*All this time he has been "sizing up" his customers and believes that \$20 to \$25 would be the price they could pay.*] I have some excellent hard-surface rugs that I think will interest you. They are so very serviceable and durable. You wanted something in the tan shades or something a little more of a mixture?

MR. SMITH. Not tan shade. Willie doesn't like anything that suggests "tanning." [*Again laughs from Mr. and Mrs. S. Miss B. mutters "stupid" and glares at salesman for saying "That's good" to Mr. S.*]

MRS. SMITH. Stop fooling, John. [*To the salesman.*] I don't know what shade I want.

MISS BROWN. [*Tartly.*] Show us something! Then perhaps we'll be allowed a little peace.

MRS. SMITH. [*To sister.*] Oh, Amy, don't mind John, [*Smith grins.*]

SALESMAN. [*Speaking to all three.*] I'll run through this pile of rugs. You may see something that pleases you. [*He proceeds to do so.*] Here is an unusual pattern.

MR. SMITH. [*To wife.*] I like that one, Mary.

MISS BROWN. What! That hideous thing! It wouldn't go at all with the room.

SALESMAN. [*To Miss B.*] Are there any particular colors in the room that ought to be matched?

MISS BROWN. Yes, the dining room wall-paper is a kind of oatmeal shade with a green border.

SALESMAN. [*Speaking to Miss B.*] I think I know just what you need. [*To all three.*] Kindly walk over here.

I've a pile of rugs that will prove more pleasing than these for your purpose. [*Gets three chairs between two piles of rugs and customers sit down.*]

MRS. SMITH. I wanted something with a center design.

SALESMAN. Yes, Madam, I'll show you something in center designs. Of course, you know they are a little more expensive. You say that you want to use it in the dining room? [*Mrs. S. nods.*] If you have a center design the table is going to cover it. Coming into the room you simply get a border effect. In that case, why not see something in an all-over pattern? You never get tired of them. [*Proceeds to show some.*]

MRS. SMITH. How much is that rug?

SALESMAN. That, Madam, is \$37.50.

MISS BROWN. Oh, your rugs are very high, aren't they?

SALESMAN. Not for the quality of them. Perhaps you are comparing the price with something bought a year or two ago. Rugs unfortunately have advanced in price like everything else. However, the quality is improved if anything. A rug like this will wear like iron. [*Turning to Mr. S.*] Just the kind of rug where there are young boys.

MR. SMITH. That's the kind we need then.

MISS BROWN. Well, I don't like that one.

[*Salesman shows several other rugs. He discovers that every time Smith expresses satisfaction, Miss Brown disapproves. He, therefore, decides to get her opinion first if possible. Mrs. Smith evidently prefers a center design—her husband's taste runs to florid patterns, and consequently Miss B. approves of neutral shades and small neat figures.*]

SALESMAN. I have a rug in this pile that has a center design, very neat but rather larger than ordinary. I think you'll like it. [*Shows it to her.*]

MRS. SMITH. How much is it?

SALESMAN. This one is only \$32, Madam.

MR. SMITH. I don't think that would go very well with the room.

MISS BROWN. Why not? I do.

MR. SMITH. [*Laughing.*] Wrong color, we must have something of the beef gravy shade so it won't show when you spill the soup.

SALESMAN. [*Smiles slightly. To Miss B.*] You say there is a brown oatmeal paper with green border? This rug is dark brown. A splendid unobtrusive color, isn't it? [*Miss B. nods her head slightly.*] It has a dark brown background and shades off into two-tone green. I really think that would match the wall-paper splendidly. [*To the wife.*] Don't you, Madam?

MISS BROWN. [*To Mrs. S.*] I really like that, my dear, such excellent style.

SALESMAN. You are right, Madam. You see, the pattern is large enough to give the rug a center design appearance and small enough to make it an excellent all-over pattern for the living room. You could use that rug as either a parlor rug or dining room rug.

MRS. SMITH. Yes, that is a rather nice rug, isn't it, John?

MR. SMITH. Right enough I guess, but I like something with more snap to it.

SALESMAN. Yes, those bolder designs are certainly attractive, but unfortunately you tire of them quickly as a rule.

MISS BROWN. What kind of a rug do you call that?

SALESMAN. That's a Wilton velvet rug.

MRS. SMITH. Is it as good as that one over there which I liked?

SALESMAN. That was a body Brussels. This rug is equal in quality in some respects to a Royal Wilton, which is a high-priced rug. The only difference between the two

is that this is made from the combings of the high-priced rug. It is made from the shorter nap, but it is not quite as closely woven as the Royal Wilton rug. You get the same quality of goods as you do in the high-priced rugs costing from \$60 to \$70, but not as closely woven; therefore it does not cost you as much. The colors in this will last you fully as long as they would in the high-priced rug, because they are made from the same goods.

MR. SMITH. Got a shorter nap. Ha! Ha! I see I won't sleep so long!

MISS BROWN. [*Sharply.*] I wish you would not let people see how stupid you are! It's bad enough in the house, but here

MRS. SMITH. Amy, my dear, control yourself. John, stop fooling. [*To salesman.*] I'm afraid it would be hard to keep clean.

SALESMAN. A rug like this is easy to keep clean, because the pile or nap is not as thick as it would be in an Axminster rug, which has a much heavier nap into which the dirt will get and accumulate. In *this* rug the dirt remains on the surface and can easily be cleaned and swept. [*Turning to Miss Brown.*] There are no colors which will give such service as regards dirt and dust as these tan shades do, because the dirt does not show on them. Then you have contrast in the rug by the variation of these other colors of brown and the shades of green. There is dignity and restraint in it. [*To all of them.*] Suppose you step back over this way. I'll lay it out by itself on the floor. [*While doing so he continues.*] Get a distant view of it as though you were coming into the room. Doesn't it look much better to you seen under more normal conditions?

MR. SMITH. Can't say I'm crazy over it. It's too dull. It looks as if it's apologizing for itself all the time.

SALESMAN. It naturally looks quieter here than in the home. When it has the furniture on it the colors are going to show up splendidly.

MR. SMITH. [*Dubiously.*] Well, I don't know.

MRS. SMITH [*To husband.*] Suppose we leave it for now.

MR. SMITH. [*To wife.*] Please yourself. I'm willing to make the old one do.

MISS BROWN. [*To wife.*] I like that rug, and you've got to have one. The old one is simply disgraceful.

SALESMAN. It's an excellent time to buy rugs. There is every chance that they will soon be worth more and none that they will go down in price.

MR. SMITH. Well, if you women insist on buying a rug, buy one and put me out of misery, but I tell you that \$25 is the limit.

SALESMAN. And you used to be able to get dandy rugs for that money, but not now unfortunately.

MR. SMITH. What is the rock-bottom cash price for that one?

SALESMAN. \$32.

MR. SMITH. Can't afford it. I might spring an extra five and make it \$30.

SALESMAN. I would like to do it, but it's quite impossible. If you are buying some small article that soon wears out you don't want to pay much for it, but in buying a rug you are getting something that is to last many years. Suppose you do pay a few dollars more for a rug than you expected. If you get five more years' wear out of it, it is actually cheaper, isn't it?

MR. SMITH. [*Hesitatingly.*] Yes, I suppose so, but . . .

MISS BROWN. I suppose you won't buy it because I like it?

MRS. SMITH. Amy, please don't bother John. He knows best.

SALESMAN. [*To Mr. Smith.*] Let me send the rug to

your home. Our man will put it down for you and if you and your wife don't like it then—why, I'll gladly change it.

MR. SMITH. All right. [*Looking at Miss B.*] If we like it, that's all that matters.

SALESMAN. What is the address? [*The usual closing operation follows and the salesman escorts them to the end of the department.*] Good day! I'm sure you'll be more than pleased with the rug. It will be out tomorrow.

PART IV

THE CULTIVATION OF CHARACTER

CHAPTER XXVI

THE MAKE-UP OF PERSONALITY

§ 262. The Salesman's All-Round Development

We will assume that the advice and suggestions given in the first part of this work as to the preparation of the sales talk have been followed. We will also assume that the art of playing the game alertly and resolutely during the interview has been studied and practiced.

So far the instruction has been definite and related to particular things. To profit to the full extent from the technique thus acquired entails the study of one other important part in the make-up of the perfect salesman. We have now to consider the general all-round make-up of the man himself; this includes the development of all the powers summed up in the word "personality."

§ 263. The Effect of Personality

One salesman is received with a welcoming smile by strangers while another is greeted apathetically or coldly. If they are known to the customer and have called on him many times before, to one a genial welcome and an attentive hearing are accorded, to the other an indifferent greeting, with a half-concealed desire to hear what he has to say as quickly as possible—probably with a view to a speedy disappearance.

The two salesmen may be fairly equal in ability, in character, and in knowledge of their goods. Why is it that one is granted a willing and attentive ear, while the other meets with indifference and even impatience? It is a question of personality. One salesman, outwardly and subconsciously,

impresses you with the force or with the geniality of his character. The appearance and manner of the other reveals no such compelling or attracting power.

§ 264. The Indefinable Thing Termed "Personality"

Personality is difficult to analyze and define. It implies the possession of certain qualities which enable one man to win out where another who is deficient in these qualities, because he has failed to develop them, will fail.

Personality, therefore, is more than mere physical attraction. A man who is handicapped by his appearance or his lack of inches may still impress others with his personality. Personality is the blending of several positive attributes such as enthusiasm, sincerity, earnestness, tact, health, vitality, and so on. These attributes taken together round out the man and form a character that instinctively we like, admire, and *trust*.

A man whose positive traits are developed into a strong personality will do far more with a given situation than a man who has made no conscientious effort to develop his powers in general. The man with a personality inspires confidence. We are ready to believe what he has to say. The salesman who has developed his mental and moral qualities so that they are reflected in his words and in the truth and clarity of his statements, is able to impress others with the force of his character. He can handle many a difficult situation with success where the man whose personality is merely negative or undeveloped will fail.

The all-round cultivation of personality is thus an important part of every salesman's study and preparatory work. If you "mean business" and want to be learning and improving all the time, the study is essential. Only the man who persistently seeks out his weaknesses and strives to eradicate them by the development of positive traits, working during

his "off" hours as well as when on duty, can hope to climb high in the ranks of salesmanship.

§ 265. How Personality Can be Developed

You will readily acknowledge that so far as outward appearance is concerned your personality is largely under your own control. You will also concede that your general manner—the self-control and courtesy of your bearing, the tone of your voice, the tact you show in not openly contradicting a customer and in avoiding topics which irritate or antagonize—these important points which help to make up a pleasing personality, are also under your control. Can you not go further? As you think the matter over will you not admit that other traits which reflect inward personality or character are in their expression and development almost, if not quite, as much under your control as these superficial traits of manner and appearance?

If, therefore, you can improve and develop your personality by the care and attention which you pay to outward and plainly visible things, why can you not improve and develop your character by the care and attention you pay to those things which help to mold and form the inner man?

§ 266. Why the Study of Personality Comes Last

The discussion of the development of personality in the salesman's general training has been reserved until the study of definite technical matters has been completed. This seems the best arrangement for two reasons.

After the salesman has acquired a technical knowledge of the details of his business and has had frequent opportunity to put the theoretical side of his study into actual practice, he is better able to appreciate the important part that personality plays in salesmanship. He needs the school of experience to reveal to him his weaknesses and strength. To

consider the development of personality as the first step in the study of salesmanship before the student has acquired a rudimentary knowledge of what this study and practice entails, would be very much like erecting a large and handsome flight of steps leading to the porch of a house before the construction of the building itself.

The study of personality should also be left as the final chapter in the salesman's education because personality is an all-inclusive term. If taken up analytically, it might be subdivided into hundreds of traits. To treat the subject in that way would be interesting for the reader, but the salesman would not find it very helpful as a course of practical study which he might definitely apply. Indeed, such a method of treating the subject would be positively confusing for the man in search of concrete advice and definite suggestions as a guide to the development of his own personality.

A preferable course, and the one here adopted, is to summarize the subject in a few main points, which, when taken together will be found to cover the whole case. Then the student is in a better position to see the relationship of these main points to the whole subject and to work each out systematically and in detail.

§ 267. How to Make the Study Practical

To make the advice of practical value an attempt is made to present it in a form that will enable the salesman to map out a definite course of procedure. This course will as infallibly lead to the improvement of his own personality in those traits in which he is weakest, or which as yet are undeveloped, as a course of instruction in swimming if perseveringly practiced will lead to the acquirement of the art.

The development of personality is considered in six chapters under the same number of heads. First in importance comes enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is the steam that drives the

engine—the yeast that leavens the mass of dough. Enthusiasm, however, may run to waste, or unless supported by the habit of industry, it may die down. The next chapter, therefore, deals with the acquirement of the habit of industry.

However enthusiastically and industriously a salesman may work, much of his effort is marred if he neglects certain little things in dress, speech, manner, and deportment. Superficially these may seem unimportant, but if ignored they may and often will prove a severe handicap. In consequence the study of these minor details must form part of the study of personality. This naturally leads to the consideration of manners and courtesy in a separate chapter.

As the salesman acquires the habit of industry, works with enthusiasm, and strives to apply the theory of his study in his practical work day by day, insensibly he will be developing that side of his character which reveals itself in the two essential attributes of salesmanship—courage and tact.

Courage is largely founded on confidence in one's self and belief in one's ability to cope with any situation. Courage, therefore, grows with experience. Tact is a sensitiveness to moods and impressions and the effect of one's words and actions on others. When tact is lacking it can be developed only in the field of experience. Therefore the systematic methods of conscious, deliberate acquirement which apply to the traits already mentioned do not apply so well to these two ultimate characteristics of the man who wants to climb high.

If you study the theory of the subject, however, and steadily put into practice the advice that you find suitable to a given case, you will find yourself gradually developing these characteristics of courage and tact which are the distinguishing marks of the man engaged in the higher flights of salesmanship. The development of these two attributes summarizes, in a sense, everything that is covered in this or any other treatise on salesmanship.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE LEAVEN OF ENTHUSIASM

§ 268. "Pep and Ginger" the Sparkle of Salesmanship

Just about 50 per cent of all big successes, whether in business, art, science, or politics, can be attributed to enthusiasm. The salesman who wishes to climb and to climb high must be enthusiastic about his work. He must be brimful of "pep" and "ginger." When he lacks this enthusiasm or this "pep," he is like an unpolished diamond—he lacks sparkle.

Enthusiasm is the quality that makes a man express his belief with the intense earnestness and sincerity needed to carry conviction. The man who is enthusiastic simply bubbles over with his belief in himself, his goods, and the advantages of his offer. Consequently the first and the most important of all requisites for the salesman who wants to work with full efficiency is to believe enthusiastically in himself and in the merits of his proposition.

§ 269. The Contagious Effect of Enthusiasm

Enthusiasm is effective first because of its psychological effect upon the salesman, and second because this effect reacts in many ways upon the customer. Enthusiasm is contagious. The "live wire" who is brimming over with "pep" can pass along his enthusiasm just as a live electric wire carries along a current of electricity. When we earnestly believe a thing, whether or not others can share in our belief, at least they are impressed with our earnestness. The salesman who is alive with enthusiasm can make contact with

even the customer who is a habitual grouch. However hard a nut to crack any man may be, he is insensibly affected by another's enthusiasm and belief in himself.

§ 270. Enthusiasm Breaks Down Opposition

The following episode illustrates the effect of enthusiasm on others:

A salesman handling an expensive line of calendars called on a retail grocer who made a practice of giving away this kind of advertising at Christmas time. The time of the salesman's call was early in July. When he explained his mission the grocer, who was evidently in an irritable mood, snapped out, "Don't waste your time and mine. I have made up my mind not to think of calendars for three months. There is nothing doing—absolutely nothing!"

"But . . ." said the salesman.

"It's no use," interrupted the grocer. "I tell you I have made up my mind. You are about the sixth calendar man who has been worrying me this week. Get out!"

The angry tone, not to say rudeness, of the dealer produced no outward effect on the salesman.

"Very well, Mr. Jones," he coolly and persistently replied, "we will talk about the order later. There is just one thing I want to say with your permission. If I were a retailer like yourself, and wanted to give my customers the smartest calendar I could find and the salesman didn't give me a chance to see his full selection, I should feel that I had not been treated squarely. Wouldn't you if you were in my shoes?"

The dealer was forced to concede that he would feel offended with this treatment.

"Now, Mr. Jones, you may not know it, but I am more enthusiastic about the designs I have in my sample case than about anything I have ever shown to you. You know that as the season advances certain designs have to be withdrawn

when all the calendars that can be produced from them in time for Christmas are sold. It would never do to sell the same calendar to two or three dealers in the same town. If you wait until October before seeing the designs, the most popular and therefore the most desirable will already have been selected by the early birds.

"Mr. Jones, why not be the early bird that catches the proverbial worm? In your own interest I want you to see what splendid novelties I have, and I want you to look at them *now*. Then if any particular one interests you, I will hold it for you until October, when you can give me your order and instructions as to printing. If I can save an especially attractive calendar for you that otherwise you would miss, I believe you will thank me for my insistence at this time. I am dead sure I have the pick of this year's designs with me now. They are simply splendid. Three months later I shouldn't be half so enthusiastic about my line."

"All right," said the grocer grudgingly, "I will look at your samples; but, understand, I will not buy today."

"That's understood," answered the salesman.

An inspection of the designs revealed one calendar which especially appealed to the grocer. "That certainly is unusual," he said with interest.

"Yes," said the salesman, "that design has already proved so popular that I know it will have to be withdrawn before the end of this month. By the way, how many calendars do you use every year, Mr. Jones?"

"About five thousand."

"Well, why not let me reserve five thousand for you. Don't bother about the order until you are ready."

The salesman left with a signed order and all instructions as to printing, delivery to be made in November. Only his own enthusiastic belief in the merits of his designs enabled him to arouse the desire to inspect his samples.

§ 271. The Effect of Enthusiasm upon Temperament

Enthusiasm has a beneficial effect upon temperament as well as upon manner. It keeps a man going. It cranks the machine and gives him faith that he can do what he sets out to do. Difficulties loom large when we are tired, indolent, or timid. But enthusiasm wakes us up and we brush the obstacles aside.

Part of every salesman's difficulty is his own feeling towards his prospects. He may feel doubtful of success or he may, because of his apathetic interest in his job, be unsympathetic, contemptuous, or careless. If one is governed by any of these feelings, it is hard to create a chord of sympathy or interest and thus hold the attention of others. A salesman who is in any of these moods dissipates his resources. The man who is enthusiastic conserves his powers and applies them with a concentrated will to succeed that inspires confidence in others.

§ 272. Loyalty and Belief in One's House

Another aspect of enthusiasm is loyalty. To remain loyal to the house he represents, a salesman must have confidence in its integrity and belief in its methods. A man whose enthusiasm in his work is founded on this belief will find it easy and natural to be loyal to his house in word and deed.

To enjoy this belief, it is not necessary to be associated with the most important or the best known house in the trade; providing a concern treats its men fairly and squarely and is honest in the statements it makes about the goods they handle, the house will merit their confidence and belief in its integrity. The salesman's faith in the house he represents and in its ideal will then react favorably upon his enthusiastic belief in himself and his offer.

It is true that many a salesman represents a house which merits his loyalty and yet fails to reveal this fine trait. Such

a man does not ring true. His character in some way is warped. If his firm feels that he lacks loyalty, no reliance will be placed in him and no important executive position will be open to him, however brilliant he may be. Enthusiastic loyalty is an essential trait which as a rule distinguishes the man who rises to a position of any responsibility. It is equivalent to the citizen's patriotic devotion to his country. The man who lacks loyalty is a traitor to his trade.

§ 273. Example of the Result of Loyalty

A traveling salesman representing a glue house was approached by the sales manager of a competing firm just before starting on one of his periodical trips. The sales manager offered him a position at a considerable advance in salary, provided he would leave his present firm at once and cover the same territory for the competing concern.

"I appreciate your offer," said the salesman. "Naturally I want to make as much money for myself as I can, but it would not be fair to my house to leave it at a minute's notice and under such conditions."

The sales manager increased the offer, but the salesman refused to consider it under the conditions attached thereto. He wanted a bigger salary, but he declined to do anything that was disloyal to his present firm. So without discussing the matter any further by making an alternative suggestion, he started on his trip.

In due time he returned from a successful journey. On entering the factory he was called into the president's office and his chief said to him:

"I am very glad you declined the offer you received before you started out on your last trip. Your work has been excellent; you have shown unusual ability—so much so that we had you in mind for an important position. The present sales manager retires in a year's time and I wanted you to be

his assistant with the idea of taking over his duties when he retires.

"Before making you this offer we decided to test your loyalty to us. However brilliant a man may be, he is no good to us unless absolutely loyal. So I arranged with my friend Mr. Simpson to make you the offer which he did."

§ 274. Loyalty Must be Revealed in Little Things

Many a man will remain loyal to the house in big things and still fail to reveal that breadth of character which is shown in loyalty in little things. It is disloyal to complain to outsiders, for instance, about the rules and policies of a concern, to criticise its methods, or to air an opinion as to one's own worth and its lack of recognition by the house. A loyal employee never does anything to injure his firm's best interests, even though to do so may appear to be to his advantage. A salesman is paid not only for his time and efforts, but for his faithfulness to the house he serves. Unless a man has that enthusiastic belief in the policy of his house as a whole which tends to develop the spirit of loyalty, he should seek another connection in which this spirit will find freer play.

§ 275. How to Develop Enthusiasm

In generating the driving force of enthusiasm the first requisite is for the salesman to enjoy his work and to throw himself eagerly into the game. The secret of eagerness and enjoyment of work lies in interest, and interest is dependent upon study and analysis. The more the salesman studies the business side of his particular sphere of work and analyzes his offer, the more interested will he become in his job, and the more eager will he be to put to practical test the theories he has worked out in his own mind.

When a man works because he enjoys working and not merely to earn so much a week, failures never dampen his

enthusiasm. He analyzes his failures, he studies their causes, and he enthusiastically looks out for another opportunity to succeed where formerly he failed. The salesman who does not enjoy his daily job works under low pressure and lacks those few extra pounds of steam which will help carry him over many a steep peak.

§ 276. Enthusiasm the Fruit of Confidence and Belief

The salesman who lacks confidence in the merits of his offer can never be really enthusiastic. When the customer raises objections and mentions the advantages of competing goods he feels discouraged. Many prospects are not interested in the offer; others are impatient and brusque at the opening of the interview; others again declare that they know nothing about the product, don't care to know, and wouldn't buy if they did—for reasons which they explain in more or less detail. The salesman must have the utmost confidence in the merits of his proposition and the firm he represents, if he is to face buyers of this type with the serene enthusiasm that can alone break down opposition.

To have confidence in himself and to believe enthusiastically in his offer, the salesman must have more than a superficial acquaintance with the advantages of his proposition; he must be immensely interested in every detail from every point of view—whether of service, utility, or the pleasure which can be derived from its use. If his goods have a style or fashion appeal, he must take sufficient interest in the artistic side of his wares to become enthusiastic about these special points of merit. If his goods appeal on the score of serviceability, he must be so interested in their mode of manufacture and the quality of their material that he is able to explain enthusiastically why they will render exceptional service. In short, the more interested he is in every detail and the more anxious he is to ferret out “reasons why” differences in

style and quality exist, the more enthusiastic will the salesman tend to become when explaining their merits.

§ 277. The Reaction of Industry on Enthusiasm

The salesman who works with enthusiasm is like a compound reciprocating engine. His enthusiasm does not run to waste. It reacts upon his work habit. The more pleasure he derives from his daily task, the more anxious he is to get to his job. Half-hearted interest and a desire to quit work as soon as a reasonable excuse can be made, vanish under the spell of enthusiasm. Thus the harder a man works the more enthusiasm he generates, and this enthusiasm again tends to keep him continually on the job until the "live-wire" work habit becomes second nature.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE HAPPY HABIT OF INDUSTRY

§ 278. Industry the Fly-Wheel of Enthusiasm

Important as is enthusiasm in a salesman's make-up it is well to remember that no man can work under full steam pressure all the time. Enthusiasm cannot always be kept up. Success itself inevitably brings reaction. Outside circumstances, such as the weather or local conditions, may be unfavorable. The energy which is based chiefly on enthusiasm is for these reasons uneven and not always to be relied upon.

Many a salesman is enthusiastic—but only in spurts and splashes. His enthusiasm is never sustained for long. It reaches high water mark after one or two successful sales but after a few failures it begins to fall. Then if it happens to be a rainy day or if he does not feel in the mood for work, his enthusiasm sinks to zero.

The governor of the fly-wheel of enthusiasm, which will control it and drive it at a steady pace all the time, is the habit of industry.

§ 279. The Effect of Industry upon Temperament

Enthusiasm can be steadily and persistently generated only when it is supported by an acquired habit of work. The first effect of this habit is that it teaches one to give concentrated attention to the task in hand and keeps one from being distracted by any outside influences. A postman hardly notices the weather. He wouldn't think of delaying the delivery of the mail because it happened to be raining. A man accustomed to a noisy office works at his desk unaware of the noise around.

When a salesman has acquired the habit of industry, outside influences, whether favorable or unfavorable, affect him but little. Some days will have their disappointments and disillusion; others will be more successful than the average. Both tend to produce corresponding feelings of depression or elation. Some men, for example, are apt to relax after any success and take it easy for a while; others lose their nerve and slow down if things do not go their way. If the habit of industry has schooled the salesman to stick to a regular day's routine, good or bad fortune are all the same to him. He keeps pegging away all the time.

A salesman will never make the most of his opportunities and pile success upon success, until he acquires the same habits of regular and punctual work that are required and insisted upon in every well-disciplined office, factory, or other organization.

§ 280. Where Lack of Self-Discipline Proved Fatal

A salesman received a telephone call at his hotel from the leading jeweler in the town he was visiting and from whom he had that day received an order. The message requested him to be at the jeweler's store promptly at 8:30 the following morning. The representative replied that he would certainly be there at that time.

At 8:25 on the next morning he was still finishing his breakfast. While eating, his thoughts ran something like this: "There's no great hurry; he has ordered all the goods he needs; he doesn't usually get down to the store until 9 o'clock, so there's plenty of time."

The salesman arrived at the store at 10 minutes to 9. As he entered, the jeweler merely nodded to the greeting of "Good morning!" His manner and silence perplexed the salesman, who opened the interview with the query:

"Well, what is it you wish to see me about this morning?

Everything was all right in the order you gave me yesterday, I hope."

"I don't want to see you now," replied the jeweler.

"But you rang me up last night and asked me to be down here this morning," expostulated the salesman.

"Yes, I did," was the answer, "and I asked you to be here at 8:30. A cousin from Minneapolis wanted to order some of those rings I bought from you yesterday. He had to catch the 9 o'clock train out of town and he has already left. As you were not here for your appointment, we concluded you didn't want the order."

"But, I didn't know you wanted to give me an order," replied the salesman. "If you had said so over the phone, I would have made a point of being here on time."

"Yes, I understand," replied the jeweler. "You'll be here on the minute if it's to your advantage. But, if you don't think it is; then the appointment has no value in your eyes. Don't trouble to call here again."

A lucrative connection was thus broken.

The salesman who seriously wants to acquire the right work habit, which includes punctuality and strict attention to business appointments, must discipline himself. He then tends to be less unstable; his temperament becomes more even; and he produces energy at much less cost than the individual who relies largely upon spurts of enthusiasm. When the habit of industry is acquired it is natural to be punctual and to do the thing promised. The industrious man does quietly and efficiently what would require a big effort of will and a good deal of fuss if one were without this wholesome habit.

§ 281. The Importance of the Work Habit in Salesmanship

For the salesman the habit of industry is especially important, because he usually lacks the moral support of working with associates and under immediate supervision. The

man who is paid on commission is apt to excuse himself for not adhering to regular hours of work on the score that he is his own master. This type of salesman comes to the conclusion that it is hopeless to call on customers before 10 o'clock, because they are invariably occupied with their correspondence; for similar reasons he cannot call after 4 o'clock in the afternoon; while to try to work on Saturday morning is a sheer waste of time.

Lacking the habit of regular work and regular hours he is continually making excuses to himself for not working. In consequence the driving force that impels him to stick to his daily task is that of a time server who works just hard enough to hold his job; or, if he is working on a commission, just enough to supply his needs.

§ 282. The Salesman Who Wants Work Can Find It

A salesman may occasionally find that there are no more customers on whom he can conveniently call during the working hours of that day. Such is very frequently his position when visiting small country places, when he must often wait over several hours in a town because of inadequate train service. He should remember, however, that his work is not wholly limited to personal interviews. He has frequently to communicate with customers by means of writing. Consequently, the man who makes up his mind that he will be on the job from such an hour in the morning to such an hour in the afternoon, can under all circumstances find useful work of some kind that will profitably occupy his regular working hours.

§ 283. The Result of Keeping Always at It

A salesman selling the specialties of a Chicago packing house had only one customer out of a possible three in a small-sized town. He was anxious to open an account with

the other two dealers but several calls proved fruitless. After calling on his customer and visiting the two other prospects without making a sale, he arrived at the station early one afternoon to find that he had just missed the last train out for the day. There was apparently nothing to do for the rest of the day but to return to the hotel and pass the time smoking in its lobby.

Instead of doing this the salesman went to the nearest telephone booth, picked out the names of a number of residents who lived in the better section of the town, and asked in each case for the lady of the house. To each lady he delivered a short sales talk on the wire. After a few words of introduction and brief mention of the merits of his goods, he asked the housewife where she usually bought her provisions. If she named one of the dealers who was not his customer he suggested that she ask the merchant to stock his specialties so that she might give them a trial—at the same time saying he would be glad to forward samples of anything in which she was interested. In this way he passed several hours ringing up a large number of people, as he knew that among the number there would be a few who would act upon his suggestions. He was requested in several cases to send samples. The final results of this profitable use of his few leisure hours were that when next he called in this town he was able to sell to all three dealers because of the inquiries they had received for certain specialties in his line.

This salesman hated to be sitting idle, drumming his heels in a hotel lobby, or scanning the comic section of the daily paper, just as some salesmen hate the work habit and are on the lookout for any legitimate excuse for avoiding it. With every excuse for loafing, he made profitable use of his time.

One result of acquiring the work habit is that it soon becomes much more interesting and amusing to keep eternally at it than to lounge around and do nothing.

§ 284. Hints for Developing the Habit of Industry

To acquire the habit of industry it is important to plan a regular daily routine which must be rigidly adhered to under all circumstances. This routine should first of all consist of regular hours of work. The salesman must be just as conscientious with himself in starting his job at a stated time and sticking to it until quitting time, as if he had to punch a time clock with the knowledge that his time card would come daily to the personal attention of the president of the concern.

As the calling of the salesman necessitates traveling from place to place and his time is more or less at the mercy of his customers, it is often impossible to map out the work far ahead. He can rarely say to himself, for instance, that he will call on so many customers every day, or that he will sell a certain quantity of goods. In suggesting, therefore, that he should cultivate regular habits of work, the intention is that he should be on the job at a certain hour and refrain from quitting until a certain hour with the fixed determination to make the best use of the time in between.

When, however, it is possible to plan the details of the day's work in advance, this should be done. If a man starts out with the intention of working so many hours and sets himself to do certain tasks within these hours, the spirit of competition that is aroused by trying to do a given thing in a given time, tends to make the work more interesting. Interest, as already stated, is the secret of concentration.

The salesman need not worry if he is unable to live up to his plan at once. Habit is a thing of growth which begins slowly and hesitatingly. But a habit that is adhered to grips you in time. The man who cultivates industry a little at a time will, after a while, be unable to be idle. In time his day's task will be carried out with almost the regularity of a machine, which neither grows tired nor suffers from moods, is neither over-sanguine nor depressed.

§ 285. Tackling the Hardest Jobs First

The salesman should also make a point, when possible, of tackling the hardest things first in his day's work. If he has an especially disagreeable customer to meet or a delicate interview which he rather dreads, the sooner it is off his mind and done with, the better. If he puts it off until nearly the end of the day, the chances are that he will be looking for excuses to shirk it and procrastinate until the next day. Procrastination is the worst of all foes to the acquirement of the habit of industry. When he tackles the most difficult task at the outset, he is fresh and keen and his enthusiasm is at its maximum point. If, in spite of every effort he fails—well, he knows that the hardest part of the day's work is over. If he succeeds, the very fact of his succeeding where failure might have been expected will exert a stimulating effect upon his enthusiasm throughout the rest of the day.

§ 286. The Importance of Foot Work

In what has been said throughout this book, the emphasis has been made upon the importance of brain work. Study, allied with practical experience on the road, is the recipe for the man who wishes to make the most of his opportunities. It must not be forgotten, however, that the daily routine of the salesman calls for considerable activity. He is constantly on the move from town to town and, while in a town or a big city, from place to place. "Foot work," therefore, also counts and in some lines of business counts for a great deal. A salesman representing a staple wholesale line, whose customers are fairly near together and who does not need to carry samples, can, if he hustles, call on from twenty to thirty customers in a day. Another man of less energy who dislikes locomotion may adopt a more leisurely method and call on only half this number.

The salesman who is enthusiastic in his work and has

acquired the habit of industry will waste as little time as possible in getting about. Given equal ability, the hustler who calls on double the number of customers will, by the law of averages, reap twice the orders and be of more than double the value of the less energetic man to the firm they both represent. Their cost in salaries and expenses is the same whether they turn in ten or twenty orders a day.

To mention this point as a precept for the salesman to bear in mind, may seem to introduce a trite and obvious subject. But it is well to remember that to walk briskly and eagerly from one place of call to another tends indirectly to generate enthusiasm and energy. Our thoughts and feelings must find expression in our acts. Conversely, our acts react upon thought and emotion.

§ 287. The Reaction of Industry upon Enthusiasm and Courage

Two of the most positive mental assets of salesmanship, enthusiasm and courage, are greatly affected for good or for ill by habits of industry. A man may experience a trying and disappointing day or he may not be feeling quite up to the mark. His enthusiasm in consequence is dampened. Under the circumstances he cannot help feeling a trifle discouraged. A man who is mercurial and lacks the work habit will, in consequence, be inclined to shirk his next day's task until he feels more in the mood. The man who works only when he feels like it is pretty sure not to feel in the mood for work on the morning that follows a discouraging day.

The salesman who has acquired the habit of industry will automatically be on his job at his regular hour, regardless of what he did the preceding day. A turn in the wheel of fortune may then bring back with a rush all his old enthusiasm. Enthusiasm is an essential trait of the salesman who tackles his job with the pertinacious courage needed to climb high.

CHAPTER XXIX

THE IMPORTANCE OF LITTLE THINGS

§ 288. Attention to Appearance Is Always Worth While

"Madam, I represent the Pasteur Milk Company," said a house-to-house canvasser as a pert, trim-looking little Irish girl opened the door. "I wish to . . ."

"Go rub the mud off your shoes on the grass. Don't stand there dirtying my front doorstep," she said with an air of command.

The salesman meekly obeyed.

"Madam, the milk I . . ."

"Take your hands out of your pockets." He obeys.

"Madam, I have called . . ."

"Never talk to a lady with a cigarette in your mouth."

The cigarette is meekly thrown away.

"Please, ma'am, have you . . ."

"Tuck that dirty handkerchief out of sight. Now I think you are fit to be seen, but you would look better if your shoes were shined, your hat brushed, and your clothes pressed. However, I will now call the lady of the house. I'm the hired girl."

This anecdote illustrates how important are manner and appearance and how many little things go to make up a pleasing whole. Often a detail of which the salesman is unconscious will detract from his personal appearance or so mar his manner that it acts as an irritant upon others. When any of these little things affect the customer unpleasantly, they handicap the salesman in creating that first good impression

which is so important if favorable attention is to be given to the offer.

Personal appearance and health enter strongly into the ability to impress others, and appearance is sometimes a much greater factor in salesmanship than the average salesperson realizes. The experienced sales manager when selecting applicants to fill vacant positions will, as a rule, insist first of all that the unknown candidate fulfill certain requisites as to appearance. If the firm he is to represent is of any standing, he must look like a gentleman so far as the care of his person is concerned; his face must be wholesome and show health; his features must show determination and character; and there must be nothing in his bearing, his countenance, or his voice to excite mistrust.

§ 289. The Effect of Outward Appearance upon Others

In outward appearance, first in importance come clothes and the details of dress. Clothes do not make a man, but the fact remains that the first impression we create is as much to be attributed to clothes as to manners. Manners and bearing may quickly make us forget a person's clothes; but until he begins to speak he is judged by the general appearance of his attire.

It does not matter if the salesman's clothes are inexpensive and not particularly stylish, but it does matter if they are not in good order and appropriate for business and for the class of men with whom he associates. A man who looks clean and well-groomed in every detail, from the shine on his shoes to the parting of his hair, creates an impression of capability so far as purely outward matters are concerned.

The accessories especially count—shoes, collar, cuffs, handkerchief, hat, finger-nails. Neglect of these matters suggests a careless and slovenly habit of mind. Unconsciously, the man who is careless of his personal appearance will tend

to create the impression that he is careless mentally as to statements he makes. His integrity and his reliability may in consequence, if nothing is known about him, suffer unmerited depreciation in the mind of the customer.

§ 290. Effect of Dress upon the Salesman Himself

The consciousness of being well and appropriately dressed has a vital effect upon everybody. Conversely, the consciousness that something is lacking in one's appearance has a more or less disturbing influence on the mind. When a man looks successful and prosperous he finds it easy to feel and act successful. The mere fact that a salesman presents a shabby and unkempt appearance suggests that he does not find his calling a prosperous one and thus, indirectly, the worth of his goods is depreciated.

The most successful of life insurance salesmen, who during the past twenty years has written over \$8,000,000 worth of insurance policies, says that in his earlier days when he had only one suit of clothes he used to clean and press it himself. When dollars were few and far between, he retained an immaculate crease in his one pair of trousers by placing them every night, before retiring, under a mattress, and before he left his home in the morning he rubbed his shoes into a super-shine.

§ 291. Importance of Appearance when Selling a Specialty

When a salesman is handling a high-grade specialty, or a line in which a return visit comes only after a long period of time, it is essential that his first appearance should be made to count as much as possible. The customer interviewing such a salesman for the first time does so more or less reluctantly. He grants an interview probably on the strength of an introduction by letter or by means of advertising matter. He knows little or nothing about the firm, and so he bases his

judgment as to its standing and worth largely on the appearance presented by its representative. If the salesman seems in any way to lack those characteristics of education, breeding, and prosperity, which are the outward indications of success, to some extent the worth of his offer suffers depreciation in the eyes of the prospective customer. On the other hand, a smart, wholesome, and well-groomed appearance will do much to create a favorable impression and open the way to business relations.

§ 292. The Handicap of Unconscious Mannerisms

It is almost equally important to beware of acquiring any irritating mannerisms, whether of speech, voice, or gesture, as it is to pay attention to dress. Mannerisms more or less irritating are acquired and indulged in quite unconsciously by the complacent person who is not severely self-critical. Such mannerisms may seem of trifling importance, hardly worthy of attention; yet when they irritate the customer or distract attention from the salesman's arguments, they injure business and may suffice to weigh against the sale.

When salesmen meet together in the hotel lobby after the day's work is done, they frequently discuss the various kinds of buyers they have met. When buyers meet in convention, they not infrequently return the compliment by discussing the characteristics of salesmen. Each group might profit by over-hearing the other's opinions.

Several buyers who were discussing salesmen and their mannerisms described their pet aversions. "There are several things I dislike to see a salesman do," said one buyer, "but the worst in its irritating effect upon me is the 'hat juggler.' He never knows what to do with his hat. He juggles it first on one knee and then on the other, and he passes it from hand to hand, giving you the impression that he is anxious to finish his sales talk, jam his hat on his head, and bolt.

"Another man has the peculiar habit of rubbing his nose violently every few minutes. While he is talking, I am wondering how it is that the skin does not become sore, or a corn appear in the wrong place.

"Another is continually picking imaginary specks off his clothes. A fourth trims and pares his nails while in my presence—ignorance of good breeding, of course, but none the less offensive. A fifth has a habit of making a little humming sound with his lips. Yet another keeps striking one clenched fist into the open palm of the other hand, and does this for the sake of emphasis forty or fifty times during the interview. The result is he becomes so emphatic that you can hardly trust a word he says."

All these are "little things" which in themselves are of trifling importance, and in the ordinary course may affect a salesman's chances of doing business in only a slight degree. But when, as in the case of an indifferent prospective customer who has been hard to approach, they produce an irritating effect and distract the listener's mind from what the salesman is saying, then such mannerisms may be handicapping him in his career to a much greater extent than he imagines.

§ 293. Crudities of Speech

There are a number of widely used colloquialisms and crudities of speech which are irritating to the more cultivated. Moreover, a buyer may use certain expressions himself and yet resent as a familiarity their use by a salesman who presumes that these more or less vulgar modes of speech appeal to him. To depart in any way from the correct or accustomed mode of speech implies that we are on a more or less familiar footing with the person addressed. To assume that we are on this footing after a few moments' brief acquaintance is a suggestion which many persons resent.

As mentioned in Chapter XI, the phraseology and mode

of speech of the salesman must be varied to suit the intelligence revealed by the buyer. In nine cases out of ten the use of slang expressions, provided the salesman's meaning is intelligible to the listener, might not result in any harm, and can be used with discretion to make his arguments more picturesque and vivid. The salesman, however, should beware lest he fall into the habit of using a few pet slang phrases, as the frequent repetition of these soon becomes intensely irritating.

Crudities of speech are as frequently due to habit as to ignorance. It should be remembered, however, that the buyer will very likely attribute any ungrammatical expressions, not to the carelessness of habit, but to stupidity or lack of education. To convey the impression that he lacks education or is deficient in intelligence is not the sort of impression any salesman cares to create.

§ 294. Examples of Mannerisms in Speech

Some people have a habit of beginning every second or third sentence with the word "now" quite unconscious of its irritating monotony. Imagine a salesman talking in this way: "Now, let me tell you about our service. Now, I know you will agree with me. Now, notice how well this is finished," and so on endlessly. The word "now" is a useful one in its place, but repeated in this manner it becomes irritating to critical ears.

Another unfortunate manner of speech, which many salesmen unconsciously fall into, is that of emphasizing every query or assertion with an additional and wholly unnecessary query, "Do you see?" "Isn't that so?" "See what I mean?" which they affix to every phrase whether put in the form of a query or not.

A common crudity is to interrogate, when one fails to understand or to hear, by means of a grunt and a rather irri-

tated expression of countenance instead of by courteously saying, "Pardon me, I did not hear," "I beg your pardon," or a similar polite remark. This form of interrogation has a jarring effect upon a person of any breeding, quite sufficient in some cases to disturb the mental poise of the listener and render him incapable of giving the salesman a patient hearing.

§ 295. Control of the Voice

The tone of voice, the loudness and rate of talking, the clearness with which a man speaks—all contribute to a favorable or unfavorable impression of the salesman's personality. Some men always talk noisily, even in a quiet room, or in a strident tone which irritates the ear as a glaring light the eye. Others talk too volubly, so that the listener is annoyed by the flood of words; others too slowly, trying to emphasize everything, so that the busy man who thinks rapidly and to the point soon grows tired of listening to the measured elaboration of their arguments.

When a man talks in a modulated, pleasant, and easy tone, which is loud enough to be distinctly heard but is not noisy, he makes it easy and pleasant for the prospective customer to listen to him, and also leaves himself an opportunity to be emphatic by raising his voice to accentuate the striking points of his sales argument. The most attractive features of the proposition can be accentuated in this way with the object of concentrating the customer's attention upon them.

§ 296. The Control and Eradication of Unconscious Mannerisms

What is true of speech is true also of awkwardness of posture or of nervous movements of the face, hands, or feet. Such mannerisms as tapping with the fingers, stroking one's hair, tilting back one's chair, even coughing or clearing the throat—while they may not have an irritating effect upon

nine people out of ten, will jar seriously upon the tenth. All these automatic motions are vents for unutilized nervous energy. They indicate that the salesman has failed to bring his own nervous system under the control of his will. Yet any and all of these indications of misapplied nervous energy can be completely controlled by the will if a sustained effort is made to eradicate them. One can learn to avoid errors in grammar and pronunciation, irritating gestures and mannerisms; one can learn to speak distinctly and in a pleasing tone as certainly as one can learn and acquire polite table manners.

The salesman who realizes the importance of these little details and wishes to be sure that he is free from anything which is irritating or a cause of reproach to himself, should watch himself at all times—not merely when talking to the customer, but in all circumstances and places. He must study the subject in his leisure moments and he must ask for advice and criticism from friends. When he ascertains his own weakness in this respect he will have little difficulty in effecting the necessary cure.

The eradication of disagreeable mannerisms and the acquirement of pleasing manners is the reward of patient effort. When once the right habit is developed, it remains and is unconsciously practiced at all times without effort.

CHAPTER XXX

THE COURTESY THAT ATTRACTS AND PLEASES

§ 297. A Salesman's Polish and Finish

Crudely finished goods, lacking the minute attention to detail which is always the mark of the master craftsman, may serve the purpose for which they are made as well as the more polished article. Yet if they are sold in competition with goods of superior finish, the more carefully finished article will win out in every case.

Exactly the same rule is applicable to the salesman. A salesman may be enthusiastic and industrious, he may be careful in the attention he pays to the details of his appearance, complete in his knowledge, and efficient in his method of presenting the argument, but his success will be marred if he lacks that fine polish and finish in manner and bearing which is implied by the word courtesy.

Courtesy is a polish and finish to a man's manners and appearance and his mental qualifications as a whole. If he lacks that softening of his manner implied by the term and carries on his daily work with the rigidity of a machine, his very efficiency will tend to become offensive and to grate on certain types of people with whom he comes in contact; whereas by tempering the natural aggressiveness and "pushfulness" of his calling with pleasing manners and courteous consideration for the feelings of others, he is able to gain his point in many cases when more forceful tactics would fail.

§ 298. The Aspect of Courtesy Termed "Politeness"

There are two aspects of courtesy. The first we term "politeness"—the external manners and bearing of the man.

The second aspect is considerateness—thoughtfulness for other people's tastes, interests, and feelings.

Much that has been said in the preceding chapter upon the importance of little things is applicable to what is meant by the term "politeness." Politeness in manners is mainly a matter of care for the little things of bearing, such as removing one's hat upon entering an office, soft manners and speech, little attentions which others do not always expect. This is an aspect of courtesy which can be developed so that it appears at all times and in every interview.

The salesman can begin when he enters the office and asks for information from the girl at the telephone desk. He removes his hat when he addresses her and speaks in a tone of voice which shows at least the deference due to her sex. In this way he wins her liking and respect. The prospective customer may perhaps not be able to see him, or may refuse to see him in spite of several calls. Eventually, however, if his manner and bearing win the liking of the person who stands on guard before the prospect's door, he or she will try to secure the salesman an interview. On the other hand, an abrupt, discourteous, dictatorial manner will prejudice those working in a minor capacity. Their influence will then be exerted to the extent that it can hinder his reception by the prospect.

§ 299. Example of the Effect of Politeness

Two wholesale salesmen handling furniture covered the same territory. One was successful while the other trudged along and made hardly an amount sufficient to cover his expenses. Both men were capable and both carried good lines. A study of their methods quickly disclosed the reason for the difference in results.

When the more successful salesman entered a store, he always had a cheery smile for every clerk in the place. His

manner to all alike was uniformly polite and genial. The less successful man, who by nature was more shy and diffident, usually ignored employees in a minor capacity; or if he spoke to them at all, he addressed them in an abrupt way. His practice was to waste no time in greeting but to make his way direct to the buyer's office. A buyer might try both lines, one in competition with the other; but somehow when the goods were sold in this way those of the genial salesman were disposed of more rapidly than those of his competitor. The clerks in the store imagined that the man who refused to recognize them felt himself to be of superior clay, and they resented his unintentional slight. The genial salesman they thought "a mighty fine fellow," and in consequence they lost no opportunity of pushing his goods.

§ 300. The Politeness of the Good Listener

Politeness is always revealed in one's manner of talking and listening. When listening to a story or when something is explained to us in which we are not interested, it is a mark of politeness to concentrate on what we are told so that the talker does not find that his remarks have been addressed to the air. Many people are quite unconscious of the fact that they are incapable of listening to others because they insist on doing so much of the talking themselves. They seize every opportunity to interrupt the conversation in order to air something which has occurred to them and which may or may not be relevant to the subject under discussion.

The salesman who finds that his mind is wandering while his customer is talking directly at him and who is waiting for an opportunity to make remarks of his own, can be reasonably sure that he lacks the courtesy of concentration, which is an innate mark of the polite listener. Before he can show helpful sympathy with another's viewpoint, he must first listen attentively to what the other fellow has to say.

§ 301. Courtesy or Consideration for Other People

The development of resolute and persistent habits of industry allied with enthusiasm for his work may often lead the salesman to overplay his hand. He pushes too hard and tends to become domineering in his aggressiveness. As a rule nine people out of ten like to make up their own minds, or to think they make up their own minds, and they dislike to feel that in any way they are driven or hurried.

It is true that in some cases the salesman must urge, and even drive, an irresolute customer to a decision. But the very fact that he is sometimes successful in doing this tends to make his manner so aggressive that it causes offense in other instances—unless it is leavened with courtesy.

These remarks are particularly applicable to the buyer who is readily influenced when he thinks that the salesman has his interests in mind. If such customers imagine that they are being driven or urged toward a certain course by a salesman's insistence or mere will power, they tend to stiffen up and draw back. If they think that he is considerate and disposed to meet them half-way, they are prepared to meet him at the same point. Therefore, the habit of looking at the offer from the customer's point of view and admitting any general disadvantages that it may possess, is one method of cultivating courtesy. The salesman thus indicates that he is sensitive to the feelings and interests of others, and this is the fine flower of courtesy.

§ 302. Aggressiveness Should be Tempered with Courtesy

A point to bear in mind is that a man who has only tireless habits of industry to recommend him and who uses his faculties in an aggressive way, without the leaven of courteous consideration for others, *is not liked*. Not all his customers may be actually offended by a purely business manner which thinks only of self-interest and leaves courtesy out of consid-

eration, but some certainly are offended. Moreover, none of them *enjoy* his visits. Such a man finds it difficult to win the friendliness of his customers, and as we have seen, the salesman who fails to do this, especially in the wholesale field, is a comparative failure.

In former days salesmen sought to create this feeling of trust and friendliness by striving for the reputation of "good fellows." They collected a large stock of funny stories, they adopted a uniform manner of joviality, and they were ready to be convivial when opportunity offered. Methods like these are out of date. Today the old-fashioned convivial and jovial manner is replaced by courteous but business-like efficiency.

§ 303. Discourtesy Should Never Be Imitated

Discourtesy in others should never be made an excuse or reason for discourtesy in ourselves. The salesman who never forgets his manners and is equally polite in every trying circumstance always receives his reward if only in the salutary effect of the self-control he has exercised.

A young ticket seller stood inside his box at a theater while a line of people stood outside. A woman pushed her way to the box office and protested angrily because of the poor seats she had been given.

"I am very sorry," replied the youth, "but they are the best I have left."

"I don't believe you," was the reply in a tone that all could hear. "There are plenty of vacant seats left."

"Those are all sold, Madam," he replied in a perfectly courteous tone, "but as they are reserved they will not be occupied until the performance begins. I am sorry to disappoint you."

Many a man would have become angry and made a sharp, impatient reply in view of the fact that the complaining woman was holding up a long line of people who were wait-

ing to buy seats. The effect of this restraint and uniform courtesy was that a man standing in line presented his card and asked the ticket seller to call on him next day. The name proved to be that of the head of a large retailing house. When the young man called the merchant said:

"A man who can keep his temper as you can keep yours is wasting his time selling theater tickets. You will find a much bigger field in my store. What's your present job worth?" On hearing the sum he offered the youth an opening in his complaint department at double the theater salary.

§ 304. Acquisition of Courteous Manners

To cultivate courteous manners and a polite bearing is not a difficult matter. First in importance is to feel kindly disposed toward others and to seek opportunities to help them or to do something which ordinarily would not be expected. For example, to hold open the door for a lady is a courtesy which some men never think of offering, simply because they have never practiced it. The courteous retail salesman promptly places a chair for a tired-looking customer before he begins to serve her. After such things as these have been done several times, they quickly become matters of habit.

Again, one can make a special effort to remember names and faces. When the salesman enters a retail store, he can seize the opportunity to address by name any of the employees he may encounter with a genial query as to what they have been doing lately, or what has happened in the town since his last visit. Little attentions of this sort all serve to impress others with one's pleasing manners and uniform courtesy.

How readily courteous manners can be cultivated, will be realized when we reflect what a simple matter it is to use the words "Thank you," and how frequently this simple matter is neglected. These two words if spoken in a tone of real sincerity and with a pleasant smile, will have much greater

weight in influencing a retail shopper to return to the store than the average salesperson believes. We all like to feel that our patronage is appreciated, and that the salesperson who has waited upon us has been pleased to do so and will be pleased to see us again. In the opinion of a prominent merchant, only one salesman in ten says, "Thank you," after every sale; and not one salesman in twenty knows how to say it effectively. The salesman who ignores this rule in any of the numerous stores of a well-known tobacco concern may expect dismissal at any time.

How much the mention of these two little words, "Thank you," reacts upon the bearing of the salesman, it is impossible to say. But the mere fact that one expresses one's gratitude and one's thanks before the customer leaves, results in the striking of a pleasant note at the moment when the interview is terminated and thus leaves a pleasing impression in the mind.

§ 305. Courtesy Part of the Salesman's Stock in Trade

Buying is a serious business. It involves an outlay to which a certain element of risk is attached. It also entails the exercise of judgment in which mistakes can easily be made. In consequence the responsibilities which fall upon the buyer are such that they frequently perplex and harass him. This may react on his mood and make him irritable. Therefore, the task of the buyer should be made as easy and pleasant as possible.

When in the presence of a harassed and irritable buyer the salesman may need to assume a courteous attitude even though beneath the surface he feels himself to be intensely irritated. The assumption of this courtesy is not hypocrisy. There is no more business or moral objection to it than there is to the varnish or veneer with which the face of furniture is finished. True, deeply felt courtesy may be impossible

unless it is reciprocated. The buyer may be morose to the verge of being disagreeable. In such a case the salesman must force himself to be polite in his manner and courteous in his bearing, however much it may go against the grain. Courtesy is part of his stock in trade that he must carry with him; he should show it just as he displays his samples. Buyers expect to be treated courteously by right of the position they hold. The maintenance of a courteous bearing under circumstances which demand an effort of will is a means of developing the imperturbable self-control which is the mark of fine manners and good breeding.

Courtesy and politeness are the sunshine of business. The sun shines not only on the surface; its warmth goes much deeper. By illuminating the outside of the man it warms the inside also.

CHAPTER XXXI

THE FIRE OF COURAGE

§ 306. Introduction

Two qualities have been constantly mentioned and as constantly implied throughout this book—courage and tact. To some extent they are antagonistic to each other. The man who is supremely tactful is rarely outstandingly courageous and vice versa.

The man who is inherently courageous often suffers from the defects of this good quality in that his aggressiveness tends to make him less adaptable to the feelings and the point of view of others. Conversely, the man who is naturally sensitive of others' feelings often lacks the driving power of the aggressive and forceful personality. The perfect salesman blends these two fine qualities in equal proportion. But as the perfect salesman does not exist (and if he did he would have a hard time fighting the imperfect customer) these two attributes must be considered in separate chapters. Taken together they sum up the essential qualities of a successful salesman so far as the development of personality is concerned.

§ 307. The First Aspect of Courage

Courage has two aspects—daring and endurance. Both are needed by the salesman and both can be developed. Daring is that kind of courage frequently referred to as "nerve." The man who is equipped with this faculty is ready to face a difficult prospect whom another salesman lacking it would rather avoid. He is eager to tackle big things and is not content to handle the small customer or the easy trade.

Nerve is a faculty possessed in some degree by every business man who stands out among his competitors as more than commonly successful. His success is in part due to an innate ability to think over a situation coolly and decide on the best course to adopt despite all risks or dangers. The daring salesman who possesses nerve never allows himself to be deterred from tackling a difficult problem that demands courage. He knows he possesses the faculty of thinking coolly and quickly; therefore, he rather courts the situation in which this mental quality will enable him to succeed where the average man would probably fail.

Nerve alone, however, unless fortified with knowledge, study, and training will not carry a man very far. Nerve degenerates into mere bumptiousness and irritating presumption unless it is supported by the more tangible and definite qualities acquired by study and discipline. But the nerve that is fortified with knowledge and practice of the art of presenting an offer in its most attractive way will carry the salesman far.

§ 308. The Second Aspect of Courage

The second aspect of courage is shown in that fine quality which we designate as persistence. The man who possesses or develops this kind of enduring courage never knows when he is beaten. He persists in spite of failure. In fact, failure acts merely as a spur to further effort.

Every salesman expects failure from time to time. It is part of his day's work. By the law of averages a certain number of customers will not be in good humor, others will be too busy, others will have just bought what he has to sell, and others will refuse flatly to see any salesman about anything unless an appointment is made. By the same law of averages, however, some customers will be in need of the thing he offers just at the time of his call, others will be

open to conviction that it is the thing they need, and others again will make a practice of interviewing every salesman who calls because they know that the information frequently obtained in this way makes it well worth their while to do so. Thus the tenacious salesman who has the kind of courage that endures goes on his way despite rebuffs and discouragements of every kind. As with the development of a muscle, the practice of persistence leads to the strengthening of the will to succeed in proportion to the resistance experienced.

§ 309. Where Quiet Persistence Made Good

The old adage of the tortoise and the hare holds good when applied to the salesman. The man who keeps plugging away and is never daunted by any number of "turn-downs" will as a rule come out on top where the more brilliant man who may be more easily discouraged will fail. Of all mental attributes perhaps the courage of persistence is the most valuable and most admired by others.

The purchasing agent of a large railroad in writing about salesmen he has met, says:

"I recall one man who won my admiration and later my orders for being a plugger. His first call was to introduce himself and his house and he did not directly ask for business. On a later call he told me what he could furnish and asked for an opportunity to serve me. At the time I was bound by contracts made by my predecessor and my superiors. He called regularly at discreet intervals and was in no way over-anxious, but stated that he was always ready to do business. He did not resent a contract which deprived him of a chance to sell. He plugged along and was so pleasant and patient that I came to admire his perseverance.

"In time he had an opportunity to bid on a very large job which we had going through. He handled a type of specialty which was also made by four other companies, and the five

companies were to submit samples. The plugger lost out, but he was a graceful loser and smilingly declared he hoped to do better next time. No hint did he make of unfairness, and in fact he went so far as to say that the make I selected was all right. He has now made good. It was later my pleasure to give him a substantial portion of our business in his line, and needless to say, his prices were right and his service as faultless as his manners."

§ 310. The Specialty Salesman Must Be Persistent

The present-day manager of an important insurance company states that when he began to work for the company his commissions during the first three months amounted to exactly \$10. Before he started out to solicit he firmly made up his mind that even if he earned nothing at all for three months he would still persist, and that he would force himself to talk life insurance at every opportunity until he acquired the art of broaching the subject with ease.

At first he felt timid and nervous when approaching a prospect. Yet he realized that though he was not making sales, he was learning quite a lot about meeting objections, handling different types of customers, and gaining that courage which is so necessary for effective work in this form of salesmanship. He didn't get "cold feet," nor did he throw up his job after a week's trial, declaring that he could not sell life insurance because it was the hardest thing on earth to sell; still less did he attribute his failure to the fact that no one wanted to buy insurance in his particular town because of bad trade, hard times, or what not. He just persistently stuck to his job, interviewing everyone who would listen to him regardless of who they were.

A year later this same young man who earned only \$10 during the first three months because of his timidity and his lack of confidence, was drawing \$100 a week. The diffidence

and fear of his early days was now replaced by a quiet readiness to tackle the hardest of prospects.

§ 311. The Cause and Control of Fear

There is hardly a beginner who does not experience a "sinking feeling" or a tremor of fear when he calls upon his first prospects. We all dread the unfamiliar and the unknown. The salesman suffering from this painful emotion in his solar plexus is at a great disadvantage when he approaches a customer. His manner shows plainly that he lacks confidence in himself and in his offer; and to the extent that his fear is apparent he tends to arouse distrust in the mind of the buyer.

The obvious remedy for lack of courage is to create such a feeling of confidence in one's ability to sell and to meet every kind of objection, that this confidence ousts all fear. Therefore, the timorous salesman when he approaches his first prospect in fear and trembling must remember that his emotion is simply due to his lack of experience. After the first few calls and especially after the first sale, he will begin to feel confidence in his ability to handle a customer; and in measure as he handles a number of customers successfully so will all fear vanish.

§ 312. Adequate Preparation the First Essential

The more the salesman drills himself in the presentation of his talking points and in the use of appropriate answers to objections that are likely to be raised, the more confidence will he feel in his ability to handle any situation and the more courageously will he approach even the most churlish of buyers. It will help him in his approach if he remembers that a prospect, no matter how important or of how peppery a type, is after all only a human being like himself and that to sell goods as he is now doing is the daily task of thousands

the world over. He is not asking a favor or seeking to sell something which is not required. He is approaching a possible customer who when the salesman's offer is thoroughly understood, will in the ordinary course of events be glad to take advantage of it.

§ 313. The Importance of the First Sale

A salesman tells the following story about his first sale:

"During a good breakfast while I sized up my proposition, mentally rehearsed my sales talk, and thought of the unanswerable nature of my arguments, I felt courageous and eager to approach my first prospect. Breakfast over, I took a street car to the business section where I was going to start operations. When I got off the car I felt surprised to see the building in which my first prospect was to be found loom up in front of me. I began to have cold feet.

"To think the matter over once again I walked around the building. The comforting thought then came to my mind—'well, after all the prospect may not be in his office.' By this time I began to feel mad with myself. Then I gripped myself by the back of my collar and hustled myself along to the prospect's door.

"I asked the girl at the information desk for Mr. Smith, hoping that he would not be in. When she asked for my card I felt bad. When she returned in a few minutes to say that if I would wait Mr. Smith would see me in a few minutes, I felt better. While waiting I went over my opening statement half a dozen times and impressed upon myself the importance of entering with a smile, of being deliberate, and of speaking more slowly than usual.

"My first customer happened to be a genial type of fellow. He greeted me with a hand-shake and asked me to take a seat. I managed to open my interview, I believe, without any trace of fear and three minutes later I had completely

forgotten that there was anything at all to be afraid of in the enthusiasm aroused in my mind by my sales talk. The prospect raised several objections which I was primed to meet and which I simply swept aside. This gave me such confidence that half an hour later I left that office with an order in my pocket.

"This was my first and last experience of feeling afraid when approaching a prospect."

As in the case of this salesman, lack of courage is as a rule due to diffidence and fear that the sales arguments will prove unavailing. But if the salesman has memorized several forms of opening statements all designed to arouse attention; if he remembers as he enters a prospect's presence to smile and to control the muscles of his face; if he takes pains to speak slowly and deliberately, knowing exactly what he is going to say, what points he is going to make, and in what order, then all fear and diffidence will quickly vanish. A few attempts will enable him to acquire that confidence which is essential in leading to a successful sale.

§ 314. Truth of Statement Gives Courage

The nervous and diffident salesman will find it far easier to acquire courage when he enthusiastically believes in the absolute truth of every statement he makes. Enthusiasm, as emphasized in Chapter XXVII, is based on confidence. Confidence alone gives courage. If the salesman thinks that he is handling an inferior line of goods or that it is necessary for him to make statements which are untrue in order to make a sale, he would be well advised to seek another connection.

There are any number of large concerns whose products are the equal of any of their kind which are constantly on the lookout for capable salesmen. No capable man need represent a firm manufacturing goods of an inferior quality or a concern whose methods of business will not stand the strictest

investigation. Before the salesman starts out on his morning round he must be able mentally to convince himself that his product has certain advantages which make it at least equal to anything else on the market. In other words, he must *sell himself* before he begins his day's work of selling to others—otherwise he will lack that enthusiasm which is like the forced draft to the fire of courage.

§ 315. The Effect of Untruth on the Repeat Order

The importance of absolute truth and honesty of statement will be realized if the salesman remembers that any misstatement will react unfavorably upon him when he makes a second call on the same customer. If the first sale is made by means of misrepresentation, courage will certainly be lacking when the time comes to face a customer with a view to a repeat order. Many a salesman is led to misrepresent goods in his eagerness to make a sale. If a sale cannot be made by honest statements and honest principles, it is far better not made.

The fellow with a glib tongue and pleasing address, who makes a good first impression and then talks the prospect into buying by means of misrepresentation, cannot return year in and year out to the same clients. The spell of his personality vanishes before the fact of the inferiority of his goods. Such a salesman never has the courage to meet the customer twice. On the other hand, the salesman who tells the truth and nothing but the truth about his goods, even at the risk of losing an order, so inspires confidence that he is welcomed and given such business as can be profitably granted him.

Every business thrives on the repeat order and there is nothing that will make repeat orders more difficult to secure than misrepresentation or exaggerated description which deceives the customer as to the merits and qualities of the goods. To sell by deceiving the customer is suicidal.

§ 316. Aim at Big Game

The salesman who honestly believes in the merits of the product and who also takes pride in the thought that he is equipped to meet every type of buyer will find that his courage increases in proportion as he aims at big game. It is human nature to prefer to tackle the man who is easily approached because of the relative unimportance of his business and to think that a number of small orders are just as good as a single large order. The courageous salesman, however, does not deceive himself with this form of reasoning. The larger his orders the more valuable he becomes to his house. The bigger the way in which a prospect carries on business the better for his firm. The big customer may be a little more difficult to approach than the small man; the salesman may have to make several calls before he finds him unoccupied and willing to grant an interview; but when once in the presence of such a buyer the chance of making a sale is just as great if not greater than when smaller game is tackled.

Most business houses confine the work of their junior salesmen to their less important customers, while the bigger game are left to the care of men who have had years of experience on the road. The young salesman may by means of training in the factory know just as much about the goods as the older man. But years of experience on the road have given the older man that confidence in his ability to handle any situation and meet any type of customer which works out in courage. The young salesman will most quickly acquire this courage by using every opportunity to aim at big game.

§ 317. The Discipline of Facing Disagreeable Prospects

The salesman also develops his courage when he forces himself to interview a man whom he knows to be a disagreeable prospect and whom in consequence he would rather avoid. This is a form of self-discipline which will react on

the salesman in many favorable ways. To tackle one buyer who is difficult to approach and known to be a grouch and then sell to him, has a better effect upon the salesman's courage than a score of successes gained without the overcoming of any serious obstacles. If he is successful in such an interview, this will make it easier for him when the time comes to face another difficult customer. If he fails, this after all is part of his day's work and the mere fact that he has tackled a formidable prospect and come out unscathed will stiffen his courage for subsequent interviews.

A salesman selling advertising for a well-known periodical was about to make his first call on a customer. Among the list of prospects handed to him was the name of one with a bad reputation because of his hectoring and bullying manner. He had formerly advertised with the magazine, but for reasons which he would not definitely state he had discontinued his advertisements. When salesmen from the periodical called on him he frequently received them but merely to "bulldoze" them and give them his opinion as to the futility of advertising in general and the advertising of their magazine in particular.

Despite the warnings of his fellow salesmen, the novice determined to approach his worst customer first. Though he entered Mr. Blank's presence with his heart thumping somewhere near his shoes, his opening greeting was as follows:

"Mr. Blank, half the men in our office are scared to face you and I have heard all about your methods of turning us down. I know that you don't believe in advertising and that you say you will never advertise in our magazine again. So I have come here this morning to try and find out what actually are your objections. I don't expect you to sign a contract for a dozen pages or for even one page, but I do expect and hope you will teach me something. If I can meet your objections I guess I can tackle anybody else. If I can-

not meet them, it has been a good experience in facing you, so now go ahead."

The blustering manner of Mr. Blank changed before the cheerfulness of this frank and open approach.

"My only objection to your publication was that I advertised in it and it didn't bring results. Therefore, whenever one of your men called asking me to renew my contract I thought of the money I had wasted in your publication and this made me mad."

"I appreciate your point of view, Mr. Blank," replied the salesman. "Some of our advertisers who have contracted for space year by year were at first disappointed with their results. You know as a business man that it is impossible for any publication to guarantee results. All that it can do is to guarantee its circulation and offer the best service possible to produce results. Now I can't guarantee results. But what I would like to do is to have the opportunity of mapping out a new plan of campaign which I believe will appeal to you better than the last. Then if you agree that it looks more attractive and has more possibilities in it, you may like to try it out. But I won't ask you to consider anything until I can show you something that will interest you and that you will believe is worth a trial."

When the young salesman left he was without his order, but he had a promise from his client to reconsider his decision if the new series of advertisements which were to be drawn up met with his approval. In addition to this promise the salesman left with much greater confidence in his ability to meet any situation that might call for courage.

§ 318. The Self-Discipline of Courage Produces Initiative

The salesman who tries to develop his nerve and endurance in the ways suggested will find that insensibly he begins to reveal the desirable characteristic of initiative. All men

who achieve something out of the ordinary possess this trait in a high degree. Their incomes, if they are salesmen or following a commercial pursuit, are larger—often much larger—than the incomes of those who are lacking in the ability to lead. Their striking success is not wholly due to their honesty or to their loyalty, although both of these traits count heavily. They forge ahead of others because their initiative impels them to do a great deal more than they are told to do and more than is a regular part of their duty.

Everybody can do what he is told to do and obey orders. Only a minority display initiative and do more than is expected of them. The salesman can begin by manifesting initiative in little things. First of all, he becomes more familiar with the goods which he sells and with the business in general than he is required to be. He uses his spare time to familiarize himself not only with ordinary conditions, but with everything pertaining to the business inside and out. This preparatory work equips him to seize opportunities that otherwise he would miss and then his courage impels him to grasp them and improve upon them.

Every employer expects his salesmen to be honest and hard working and to do as they are told to do; but he does not and cannot demand that they show initiative. The salesman who has the courage to act upon his convictions when a favorable opportunity presents itself will develop initiative and forge ahead in the great game.

§ 319. Example of Initiative

A traveling salesman representing a flour manufacturer visited a town in the Middle West which had just experienced a flood. Hundreds of families were homeless and without resources. The salesman's business was largely with one buyer, a grocer, whose premises had been completely swept away. The man had formerly been a good customer of the

firm and prompt in his payments, but such was the loss that he had incurred and so serious seemed to be the inevitable interruption to his trade that ruin stared him in the face. When the salesman called on the dealer he found him in the depths of despondency and with no suggestions to make as to the rebuilding of his vanished business.

Without waiting to consult his house the salesman first of all promised a big extension of credit. He then offered on his own responsibility and on behalf of his firm to donate a quantity of flour for the relief of the inhabitants if the grocer would consult with other business men of the community and form a relief committee. He procured from the grocer a list of the firms which had been supplying him with other lines of his stock, and to each he sent a wire briefly stating the nature of the disaster and asking both for contributions and for an extension of credit. As the floods in question had aroused the sympathetic patriotism of the nation, these requests were promptly acceded to. The salesman spent over \$100 in telegrams, but before his day's work was completed he had secured over \$5,000 in promises of help for the town, and extensions of credit for the dealer which made it possible for him to begin to build up a new business and look the future in the face.

When the members of the firm heard of the measures their salesman had taken, he received their hearty commendation. The house trusted the judgment of its representative, it felt proud of the initiative he had revealed, and his action was approved of in every way.

Initiative of this kind, which was founded on the courage of facing a disastrous situation with vigorous promptitude, resulted in material advantage to the community, in the rebuilding of the retailer's business, and in the enhancement of the salesman's prestige as a man of resource and strong character.

§ 320. The Exercise of Initiative Develops Faculty of Judgment

Judgment presupposes the ability to weigh up the advantages for and against a proposition and then decide as to the best course to pursue. It is obvious that before judgment can be revealed a course of action must be decided upon. Judgment is therefore the necessary corollary to initiative. If we first manifest the courage of initiative and then profit by our mistakes, insensibly the powers of judgment are developed. The timorous man who is excessively cautious when an opportunity presents itself to display initiative and to exercise his judgment discloses the weakness of procrastination. His caution needs to be fortified by courage if he is to stand forth as a man of sound judgment.

The combination of initiative and endurance when steadied by the fly-wheel of judgment and driven by the force of enthusiastic industry, needs only the lubricant of tact to round out the salesman's personality until it is as attractive and compelling as that elusive thing personality ever can be.

CHAPTER XXXII

TACT THE LUBRICANT OF THE SALES INTERVIEW

§ 321. Definition of Tact

Tact is the complement of courage and is needed to round out the forceful personality. Tact is the intellectual quality as courage is the moral quality of the successful salesman. It is the lubricant which takes the creaks and jars out of the critical situation. The tactless salesman will find that sand has a way of eating into the bearings of his point of contact with the customer. His enthusiasm may be working at high pressure under a full head of steam; his courage may give him immense driving power; his sales talk may form a perfect piece of mechanism; but if he lacks tact his work will fail—just as a piece of machinery, however carefully put together, fails to act without lubrication. Or if it works at all it will be painfully, with much creaking and groaning.

Tact is that mental alertness which enables us to say and do what is best under the circumstances. Every chapter in this work has been more or less a lesson in tact. When an appeal is made to the right buying motive, tact is shown in the adaptation of the selling talk to the mental attitude of the buyer. When manner and method are varied to suit a buyer of peculiar temperament, the same tact is displayed. Tact implies patience, cheerfulness, courtesy, gracious acceptance of an inevitable situation, close observation, the power of quick decision as to the best thing to do or to say, and every mental quality which conduces to the harmony of an

interview. In its essence it is the ability to sense the thoughts, feelings, or emotions of others so that nothing in word or deed antagonizes.

§ 322. Tact Is Revealed in Little Things

Tact is so all-pervading and yet intangible in its nature that it can be shown in many unobtrusive ways. The most obvious is to refrain from doing or saying anything which will hurt the feelings of others and to do everything to put others at their ease. Many people are deficient in tact because they have not the imagination to realize how their thoughtless remarks or unconsidered acts hurt more sensitive natures. One must intuitively sympathize with another person's weaknesses or deficiencies to be really tactful. A critical or contemptuous attitude of mind kills the sympathy of understanding.

A lady entered a millinery store to buy a hat. In comparison with her height her head was unusually large and she seemed to be sensitive at the thought of drawing attention to what in her mind seemed a physical defect. Half apologetically she said to the saleswoman:

"I don't know whether or not you can fit me because my head is so large. I always have a dreadful time finding something I can wear."

The quick-witted saleswoman at once brought out a hat that was too large for the customer, saying, "We have many customers who need hats rather larger than the usual size and this is by no means our largest size. Will you try this one on, Madam?"

This tactful action and these few words sufficed not only to relieve the customer of her embarrassment but to free her mind from the impression that the size of her head was in any way abnormal. The saleswoman possessed that intuitive sympathy which enabled her to place herself in the position of another person.

§ 323. The Tactful Salesman Is Never Argumentative

The tactful salesman, as exemplified in Chapters XVI and XVII, cultivates the art of saying a difficult or contradictory thing in a pleasing way which cannot cause offense. As much as possible he avoids topics which lead to argument. When argumentative assertion is unavoidable, under no circumstance does he ever betray any irritability in voice or manner, or indicate that he is finding it difficult to keep his temper under control.

Tact enables the salesman to tell when it is necessary to humor a customer's prejudices or to concede the truth of certain arguments which in some way minimize the value of the offer. Such concessions often inspire far more confidence than contradictory statements, however well reasoned. The tactful salesman is always willing to concede non-essentials if by so doing he can accentuate the importance of the things that are vital.

§ 324. Tact Essential in Breaking Down Prejudice

The irritable, domineering type of buyer is frequently unreasonable in his prejudice. Only a salesman of consummate tact who is sensitive to every mood is competent to deal with the person who shows a marked prejudice out of mere "cussedness."

A dealer who had been bombarded with descriptive literature of an adding machine became irritated. He believed he had no use for the device; he resented in his own mind the fact that his desk was littered with circulars which he thought were of no interest and which in consequence promptly found their way into the waste basket.

When the adding machine salesman called, the prospect's greeting ran: "I am not interested in your machine. Be good enough to tell your mailing department not to pester me any more with their circulars. I have no use for such a

device." He was too much of a gentleman to say, "And now get out," but his manner implied it.

The salesman realized that if his offer were to be given impartial consideration he must jump right into his proposition. Argumentative assertion must at all costs be avoided and a tactful appeal made to the customer's self-interest in his opening sentence.

"Mr. Jones," he said, smilingly and in a suave voice which compelled attention, "you would appreciate the value of a pencil that would write down any sum of figures you wanted it to write and would then add them up of its own accord, would you not?"

The irritable prospect consented grudgingly that such a pencil as described by the salesman would be a useful tool for any office desk.

"Well," replied the salesman with the enthusiasm of manner that rarely fails to awaken interest, "that is just what my machine will do for you. But it will not only add with absolute accuracy; it will divide, it will subtract, and it will even multiply. In fact it will do in an hour as much work for you, and much more accurate work, than any clerk can do in a day. It saves its cost in wages alone within a year. It makes possible the compiling of statements that you will find invaluable in managing your business. Let me show you not one or a half a dozen, but a score of different ways in which you will find the device useful. Just give me five minutes and I'll convince you that my machine will pay for its cost ten times over."

As in this example, the tactful salesman never recognizes irritation in others by answering a petulant argument with an open contradiction. On the contrary, by means of an apt reply illustrated by metaphor or simile he tries indirectly to refute the weakness or unreasonableness of his prospect's opposition.

§ 325. Tact Senses Hopeless Antagonism

Certain natures are instinctively antagonistic and any effort to bridge the gulf, however tactfully made, leaves a feeling of constraint. The tactful salesman can always sense when his personality jars on another. In such circumstances he keeps himself in the background as much as possible and makes no attempt to place the interview upon a footing of geniality. Instead, every effort is bent on switching the mind of the prospect from the salesman's personality and his appearance to the sales talk and the goods. He at once plunges into his argument; if he has any samples he displays them as quickly as possible; and he eliminates the "I" and his own views and opinions from the conversation. In so far as he succeeds in transferring the attention of the buyer from himself to his goods the interview progresses favorably.

Many salesmen make the mistake of trying to thaw or to warm-up the man who is cold and refuses to be genial. When the customer's unwilling mood is tactlessly ignored and an attempt is made to thrust the salesman's personality forward, any possible chance of making a sale vanishes.

§ 326. Tact Recognizes the Hopeless Prospect

Occasionally the salesman's visit will be found to be inopportune. There is a right time and a wrong time for any interview and the tactful salesman never wastes his own and his customer's time by insisting upon talking at the wrong moment.

A dealer, for example, may be waiting upon customers; a buyer may be dictating to his stenographer or preparing to leave the office; or an accumulation of papers on the desk may indicate that the business man is more anxious to get on with his work than he is to listen to the salesman. Under these circumstances the tactful salesman quickly sums up the situation and unerringly decides whether it is better to wait until

he can have the undivided attention of the prospect or to ask for another appointment and then withdraw.

After the interview begins the tactful salesman intuitively feels whether or not his talk is convincing. He quickly recognizes the fact when he is in the presence of a stubborn, obstinate type of person who has firmly decided not to allow the argument to influence him in his determination not to buy. Under these circumstances he does not blindly and pertinaciously continue his argument; he comes straight to the point by asking whether it is a waste of time for him to continue his sales talk. But he does this apparently tactless thing with such tactful sincerity and openness that the customer instead of being offended is rather disarmed.

In many cases tact of this kind dissolves antagonism and transforms a man who has obstinately determined not to be convinced into a reasonable human being who is willing to give a fair hearing to the proposition.

§ 327. Tact in Its Negative Aspect

As the whole purpose of this book is more or less a study of the art of revealing tact, the subject may be concluded with a brief summary of the negative aspect of tact.

Mere obsequiousness is not tact. Flattery is not tact. To try always to please and ingratiate oneself is not necessarily tact. Success in salesmanship implies the ability to make people do what the salesman wants them to do. Often he finds he is faced with strong opposition that calls for all his fighting qualities. But because these very fighting qualities are used discreetly, he does not lose the respect of his opponent, but on the contrary wins admiration and frequently liking.

Tact does not always imply stating the plain and unvarnished truth, yet the man who lies has no tact. Tact does not always entail an absolutely accurate description; yet the man who exaggerates lacks tact. In short this essential quali-

fication of tact implies the ability to look through the eyes of the listener; to tell him what he would like to know so far as truth permits; to sympathize with him in his mental attitude; to weigh up the advantages, for and against, of seeking to lead the customer either by reason or persuasion or of driving him by the strength of personality—and to act accordingly. This summarizes the whole art of tactful salesmanship.

§ 328. Summary of Development of Personality

If you will try and keep on trying you can bring your personality into such a state of discipline that you will make an impression of effective, self-controlled alertness upon all whom you meet. There will be no slackers among the forces of your personality. All your powers will be constantly mobilized. Get your mental equipment first, and then strive zealously to round out your personality by using those traits in which you feel yourself deficient, and you will strengthen every mental and moral power in proportion as you bring them under control of your will. This is the secret of self-discipline.

To develop yourself in the way suggested is an achievement of which every man is in some degree capable. The attainment of this end rests ultimately upon one thing, *persistence*. You must take up one thing at a time and see that thing through to the bitter end.

If you will take up one of those numerous aspects of your mental or moral training which have been considered in detail and will work deliberately and steadfastly day by day until by study and practice you have assimilated the knowledge or strengthened the trait in which you are weak, you will find before you realize it that your personality is being made over, and that your character is gradually improving.

First study your proposition. Then go out and sell it. Then study yourself and your failures, and *do better*. That is the secret of success in the art of salesmanship.

APPENDIX
QUESTIONS AND PROBLEMS

PART I—PREPARING TO MEET THE CUSTOMER

Chapter I—The Study and Practice of the Art of Salesmanship

1. Give three examples of the exercise of salesmanship in other than the commonly understood manner of selling goods.
2. Give an example, from personal experience if possible, of the use of tact in selling goods.
3. As a test of imagination, describe how you would go about finding prospects for typewriters.
4. Why is it difficult to construct a sales talk about the goods without considering the customer?
5. As a test of ability to impart knowledge to others, define in your own language the following: salesmanship, personality, lucidity, imagination, tact, courage.

Chapter II—Motives Behind All Buying

1. Explain what a "buying motive" is and why it must be appealed to in the construction of the sales argument.
2. Name some of the more important buying motives.
3. Name three articles the purchase of which will satisfy each of these instincts.
4. What is the strongest instinct usually concerned in the purchase of the following articles by the consumer: stoves, tobacco, tables, dress suits, pictures, canoes, toys?
5. What are the buying motives in the following instances?
 - (a) A merchant buys a new show-case for his store.
 - (b) A real estate dealer buys a large diamond for the purpose of impressing people with his success so that they may have greater confidence in him.
 - (c) A school buys 100 text-books for use in classes.
 - (d) A student buys an expensive bookcase in which to keep his books.
 - (e) A merchant buys an adding machine because it eliminates errors.
 - (f) A man buys a plot of land with the object of selling again.

6. Give three examples of sales in which three instincts may be appealed to.
7. Some instincts not covered in this chapter are: love of home, love of refinement, justice, kindness. Give examples of an appeal to each of these instincts.
8. To what instinct should the salesman *first* make his appeal?
9. How may the salesman determine what the buying motives are?

Chapter III—Attitudes of Buyer and Salesman

1. What is the mental attitude of the wholesale buyer toward salesmen?
2. What are the two classes of specialty buyers?
3. What is the general mental attitude of each toward salesmen?
4. What should be the general attitude of the salesman toward each class of buyers?
5. How can the appeal to the motive of profit be strengthened?
6. What is the difference between the mental attitude of an old customer and of a new prospect toward a salesman?
7. What do you think would be the difference between the general attitude of a merchant in a small country town and that of a merchant in a large city?
8. Assume that there is a shortage of raw materials for paper-making, that prices are advancing rapidly. How would this affect the attitude of the buyer of a paper-mill toward salesmen?
9. What is the broad distinction between selling at wholesale and selling a specialty—so far as the attitudes of buyer and salesman are concerned?

Chapter IV—The Preparation of the Selling Talk

1. What is the best method of learning a sales talk?
2. Why should a variety of sales arguments be memorized until the student is "word perfect"?
3. What is the most important of all factors to bear in mind when considering the sales talk as a whole?
4. Analyze the following, showing what the talking points are; also build up the selling arguments therefrom:
 - (a) To a grocer: a line of canned peaches.
 - (b) To a haberdasher: a line of men's shirts.

- (c) To a housewife in her home: a line of aluminum ware.
- (d) To a retail customer: a box of shoe polish and a fountain pen.

In analyzing these articles the student will be more or less unfamiliar with the product. The object, however, is to set down what the student considers the talking points and the general argument which might be used.

Chapter V—The Customer's Mental Journey

1. Define the mental state of attention; interest; desire; decision.
2. Analyze the following sale, showing where the mental steps are developed: A gentleman purchases a shirt in a haberdashery store. As soon as he makes his selection the salesman says, "Have you a scarf that correctly harmonizes with this shirt?" "Well, I don't know," the customer replies. Salesman takes a brown scarf from a rack, lays it on the shirt, and says, "You notice the unfavorable effect of wearing, for instance, a brown tie against the red stripes in this shirt—the colors do not harmonize. Now here is a tie" (substitutes one of dark blue) "that harmonizes with it. Doesn't that look fine? Here is another that gives a tasteful impression." Salesman hands both scarfs to customer, who tries them against the shirt to observe the effect. As he appears undecided, the salesman says, "Why not take both?" "I will," replies the customer.
3. Give general reasons why customers show indecision.
4. What are the two kinds of interest?
5. Why is not the purchase always made when desire is aroused?
6. What reasons make a prospect who has reached the stage of desire hesitate before making a decision?
7. Give three examples of sales in which decision would be easy to secure.
8. Give three examples of sales in which it would be difficult to secure.
9. How does the natural temperament of the prospect affect the securing of the decision?

Chapter VI—Modes and Methods of Arousing Interest

1. Why is enthusiasm important in arousing interest?
2. Give three examples of the simple method of arousing interest.

3. Give three examples of the demonstration method of arousing interest.
4. Explain how the demonstration method of approach might be used in the following:
 - (a) In selling a gas lighter to the home.
 - (b) In selling oleomargarin to a grocer.
 - (c) In selling matches to a grocer.
 - (d) In selling paper for printing to an advertising agency.
5. Give examples of the use of "direct appeal" in arousing interest in the following:
 - (a) In selling hats to a hat store.
 - (b) In selling package sugar to a customer in a grocery store.
 - (c) In selling stockings to the home.
 - (d) In selling a check protector.
6. Illustrate how an arbitrary connection with interests of the prospect might be made in the following instances:
 - (a) In selling a duplicating machine to a prospect from whom the salesman has received a circular letter.
 - (b) In selling rubber cushions for typewriter keys to a typist who has recently competed in a speed contest.
 - (c) In selling bread in a grocery store to a customer who has been in the habit of baking her own bread and has just recovered from an illness.
7. Give two illustrations of the "flank" approach.
8. Correct the following opening remarks:
 - (a) By a jobber's salesman to a grocer, "Are you in the market for anything today?"
 - (b) To a customer in the electrical goods department of a department store: "Would you be interested in seeing some electric irons?"
 - (c) To a business man in his office: "Have you a few minutes to spare? I want to explain a proposition to you."
 - (d) To a garage owner by a salesman offering a line of automobile polish: "I should like to interest you in a new line of automobile polish."

Chapter VII—Interesting the Retail Customer

1. State what questions you would ask a retail customer under the following circumstances:
 - (a) Customer says she is interested in buying a pair of shoes.

- (b) Customer in a stationery store asks to see some writing paper.
 - (c) Customer in a drug store wishes to buy a tooth-brush.
 - (d) Customer in a furniture store says she is looking for a dining room table.
2. What is the object of showing a variety of goods?
 3. How many different articles would you show in the case of the following sale: shoes, hats, pocket-knives, hair-brushes?
 4. How would you deal with the customer who is "looking around," after she has said she does not wish to be shown anything?
 5. What is the rule to apply in determining the price of goods to be shown?
 6. How may discussion with regard to sizes be avoided?
 7. Why should claims of superiority not be made unless supported by evidence?
 8. Give two positive remarks that might be made in showing each of the following: shoes, writing paper, tooth-brush, dining room table, baseball, hat.
 9. A boy enters a sporting goods store and asks for a "Thomas" baseball. The store does not keep them. Illustrate how the salesman may proceed to sell the "Harvard" baseball.
 10. A customer asks in a hardware store for a "Harper's" knife. The store does not keep it. Its leading brand is the "Gem" knife, which is equal in quality to the Harper's, but the store considers the line better for the reason that the manufacturer maintains an unusually efficient inspection service which prevents defective knives from passing through the factory. Incorporate this information in a brief sales talk.
 11. A customer enters a hardware store and asks for a "Harper's" knife. These the store has. The store desires to push the "Gem" brand for which it holds exclusive agency. Explain how you would attempt to sell the latter brand.
 12. A lady enters a furniture store to buy a dining room table and asks to be shown some of oak. The store has tables of maple which it wants to dispose of and which have been marked down. Describe how you would proceed to sell the latter.
 13. A lady enters the furniture department of a department store and on being approached by a salesman says she merely wishes

to look around. The salesman notices that she pays particular attention to wicker rocking chairs. Several chairs of this kind have been marked down. Describe what you would do in such a case.

14. A man comes into a drug store and says he is interested in a safety razor. The store carries three kinds—a \$1 razor, a \$4 razor, and a \$5 razor. The \$4 kind is an exclusive brand; the \$5 one pays the largest profit. So far as the store is concerned, there is no choice between selling the \$4 kind and the \$5 kind. What razor or razors would you show to the customer and what sales talk would you use?

Chapter VIII—Vividness of Mental Impressions

1. Improve the following statements by making them more definite:
 - (a) Our goods are the best.
 - (b) Your boy could have a lot of fun with this automobile cart.
 - (c) You ought to have a storage tank. You could save money on your gasoline. (This is said to an automobile owner who buys gasoline at the garage.)
 - (d) This cloth is very durable.
 - (e) This hot water bottle will last a long time.
 - (f) A telephone would save you much time.
 - (g) A new sign on the front of your store would be a good investment for you.
2. Give examples illustrating the use of similes in making statements about: gloves, pocket-knives, writing paper.
3. Give examples illustrating the use of metaphors in making statements about: books, furniture, clothing, oranges.
4. Illustrate reasoning by analogy in the following circumstances:
 - (a) A prospect says, "I have got along so far all right without an insurance policy. I can get along without it a little longer."
 - (b) A salesman offering a system of loose-leaf records to a business concern using old-style ledgers receives the response, "Our present method is satisfactory."
 - (c) A salesman offering carbon paper to a business man receives the objection, "I can buy more cheaply."

Chapter IX—Winning the Interview

1. What is the one definite rule for securing an interview that is hard to obtain?
2. How extreme may be the salesman's methods of securing an interview?
3. Suppose your card is returned by the boy who says, "Nothing doing, the boss is mad today and won't see anybody." What would you do?
4. A salesman may sometimes be told that "The buyer will see him in a little while if he cares to wait." After half an hour the boy tells him that he thinks the buyer is going out as he has put his hat on. What would you do under these circumstances?
5. The buyer for a jewelry department in a store sends word that he will see the salesman next day. When he calls he is told that the buyer finds there is nothing he wants, so cannot see him. What should be done?
6. How can the salesman win the friendliness and co-operation of subordinates?

Chapter X—The Generalship of the Preapproach

1. What is the preapproach and why is it often necessary?
2. Give three examples illustrating its value.
3. State what knowledge might be usefully obtained in the preapproach to a sale of:
 - (a) Glassware to a retail glass and china store.
 - (b) Leather belting to factories.
 - (c) Magazine subscriptions to the home.
 - (d) Coffee in bulk to grocers.
4. How can the salesman estimate the buying power of a retail store?
5. How can he estimate the buying power of a lady when calling upon her at her home?
6. How might the following information be utilized?
 - (a) A young lady enters a furniture store. The salesman knows she is about to be married.
 - (b) A man enters a hardware store to buy a safety razor. The clerk knows that he owns an automobile.
 - (c) An automobile owner calls at an automobile accessory

store to buy an inner tube. The salesman knows that he has just had a bad blow-out.

- (d) A salesman offers an unadvertised line of pickles to a grocer. He knows the grocer is partial to advertised lines because he finds they sell more easily.
 - (e) A wholesale fish salesman calls on the owner of a summer hotel. He knows that the hotel is only half filled.
 - (f) A printing salesman learns that a certain concern he has been following up has a new advertising manager.
-

PART II—IN CONTACT WITH THE CUSTOMER

Chapter XI—The Delivery of the Sales Talk as a Whole

1. Explain why a single sales canvass learned by rote is a weak method of presenting the argument.
2. What are the advantages of using elaborated talking points and how can these be best employed?
3. Enumerate three rules for making the sales talk convincing.
4. Build up progressive assertions by means of which the customer will be led to acknowledge that he is losing several thousand dollars a year because his factory is not equipped with a piece of labor-saving machinery which saves the wages of six men at \$2.50 a day, costs \$500, and is automatic in action.
5. What group of talking points should be presented first in the following instances and what buying motives should be appealed to by them?
 - (a) A salesman offers a department store buyer some ladies' vanity cases in which the quality is the same as those the store is now handling, but the price is considerably lower. The buyer has never heard of the concern before.
 - (b) A salesman offers a vacuum cleaner costing \$25 to the housewife.
 - (c) A salesman offers an expensive automobile to a prospect who is satisfied to run the small car he now owns.
 - (d) A retail salesman in a hardware store suggests to a customer who has just made a purchase that he buy a kit of tools.

Chapter XII—Things to Remember in Opening the Interview

1. What factors need to be considered in securing the attention of the customer?
2. What should be the first impression the buyer gains from the salesman's manner and appearance?
3. Is it necessary for the salesman first to introduce himself?
4. When is it wise to use a card in introducing one's self?
5. When should the salesman offer to shake hands?
6. Should a salesman ever apologize for taking up the prospect's time?
7. How should the salesman deal with a customer who gives him only divided attention?
8. How should the salesman proceed if he is unable to gain favorable attention?
9. What should the retail salesman do when he sees a customer approaching?
10. What should be the introduction of the retail salesman?
11. How should he introduce himself to the customer who by her manner indicates that she is "looking around"?

Chapter XIII—Things to Remember in the Body of the Interview

1. What is the difference between comparison and "knocking"?
2. A wholesale stationery salesman offering pencils to a stationery store meets the objection, "These pencils I now handle cost the same as yours and they have a better finish." What should the reply be?
3. Explain how a salesman selling shirts to a haberdasher might make a comparison between his goods and a competitor's without "knocking."
4. Name four articles that require demonstrating in order to make a sale.
5. Name four articles with which demonstration is not absolutely necessary, but could be used to advantage.
6. What is wrong with the following procedure? A salesman calling on a druggist introduces himself and then says, "Mr. Brown, how much does your business in rubber goods amount to?"

7. What kind of testimonials exert the strongest influence?
8. When are direct testimonials most effective?
9. When are indirect testimonials most effective?
10. Give two examples of the use of indirect testimonials.

Chapter XIV—Different Types of Customers and How to Deal with Them

1. What would be the attitude of the following buyers towards the salesman?
 - (a) The wholesale buyer who is ignorant and conceited and decides matters by snap judgment.
 - (b) The careless, easy-going, retail buyer who is given to relating stories irrelevant to business.
 - (c) The stolid, skeptical, yet able, specialty buyer who continually finds fault with the offer and who never buys without first trying to secure lower prices or better terms.
 - (d) The good-natured buyer who agrees to everything the salesman says, but refuses to buy until he has had time to consider the proposition.
 - (e) The cautious, undecided specialty buyer who listens stolidly to the salesman's selling talk but who, when asked for an opinion, replies, "Well, I don't know," or a similar hopeless remark.
2. What should be the salesman's general conduct in each of the above cases?

Chapter XV—Characteristic Retail Types

1. Describe the characteristics of an extreme type of irritable shopper.
2. How should the haughty, supercilious type of customer be handled?
3. How can the irresolute person who finds it difficult to make up her mind be helped to come to a decision?
4. Why is it necessary to ask the irresolute type of customer more questions than would as a rule be necessary?

Chapter XVI—Objections and How to Answer Them

1. Why is it necessary to prepare answers and rejoinders to objections?

2. Explain the two kinds of objections and different methods of meeting them.
3. What should be the attitude of the salesman when he is compelled to contradict the buyer?
4. To what is the indecision of the buyer frequently due?
5. How are excuses best answered?
6. When an objection is raised as to quality what is the best procedure?
7. How can an objection as to price be best handled in different cases?
8. How is the objection, "We are satisfied with present connections," effectively met? Construct your own reply.
9. When a dealer says he has no room for a new line, what should the salesman reply?
10. What should the salesman's attitude be toward the buyer who is in a pessimistic mood?
11. When combating a positive statement that is erroneous, what must the salesman do to avoid flatly contradicting the buyer?
12. What is the best method of handling the customer who has a grievance?

Chapter XVII—Excuses and How to Meet Them

1. How should the excuse, "I can't afford it," be met?
2. Construct an answer to the excuse, "I can't afford it," in the case of a woman shopper who is examining several makes of gramophones and objects to the price of the finest instrument. She has several children.
3. Construct an answer to the objection that a customer who is a student cannot afford to buy a typewriter when easy terms of payment at the rate of 15 cents a day are offered.
4. How should the excuse, "I am too busy to decide now," be answered?
5. Give an effective reply to the excuse, "I'll have to think it over."
6. Answer the following objections or excuses:
 - (a) A salesman representing a shoe manufacturer calls on the buyer of a department store with a line of children's shoes designed on new lasts. The buyer says, "I know all about your proposition and it is nothing we are interested in."
 - (b) A salesman calls on a druggist who says, "I know in ad-

vance that I don't want your goods, so you will only be wasting my time to go on."

- (c) The proprietor of a small five-and-ten-cent store when offered a line of kitchen knives says, "I buy such goods from a friend."
- (d) A salesman calling on a hat store with a line of caps is met with the objection, "Your house did not use me well on a former occasion."
- (e) Another prospect of the same salesman objects, "Your line is too good for my trade. They demand cheaper caps."
- (f) A grocer who is offered a new breakfast food says, "If I can return what I don't sell I will give you an order." This is not allowed by the house.
- (g) A salesman offering flour calls on the head of a large bakery and is met with the response, "I haven't time to talk with you today." The salesman cannot go back again as he must leave town within two hours.
- (h) A manufacturer's salesman tries to sell a line of arch supporters to a shoe dealer. The merchant replies, "I have had no demand for such goods."
- (i) A prospect for an adding machine admits that the machine would be a good thing for him to own, but that it costs too much.

Chapter XVIII—The Diplomacy of the Close

1. In what respect does the close differ from any other part of the sales interview?
2. When should the salesman attempt to close and how often?
3. What is the most important thing to remember when the salesman wishes to test the customer's mental attitude toward an order?
4. Why should the close never be put in the form of a query?
5. Explain what is meant by painting a mental picture.
6. Illustrate this by showing how it may be done by a salesman selling an \$8 dictionary to an office clerk earning \$20 a week. The clerk is married and has two children who are going to school.
7. Give an example of a closing summary which depicts the customer using the goods when the following articles are bought:

an expensive sealskin coat, a beautiful oil painting, a summer bungalow, a rare set of china, a motor boat.

8. Make the following remarks more positive:
 - (a) Is your stock pretty well filled up?
 - (b) I don't think this pattern is as attractive as the other.
 - (c) These light colors don't seem to be so popular this season.
 - (d) This butter is a day older than the other.
 - (e) This candy doesn't come in such a good-looking box as that, but it is really just as good. The lower price is due to the fact that it comes in a cheaper box.
 - (f) You will find that the Smith Manufacturing Company won't give you as quick deliveries as we will.
 - (g) That book is not quite so popular as this one.
 - (h) Will a dozen eggs be too many for you?

Chapter XIX—Things to Remember when Closing

1. What is meant by "managing the interview"?
2. Why is it necessary for the salesman to manage the interview?
3. A wholesale salesman has just received an order for linoleums from a new customer. Describe what he should do and say after writing the order and securing the signature.
4. Illustrate how decision may be secured in the following instances:
 - (a) A customer in a stationery store is buying a box of stationery and is doubtful as to whether to buy initial stationery or plain.
 - (b) A customer is buying a flash-light and does not know whether to buy a vest-pocket size or a larger one.
5. A salesman offering canned peaches to a grocer has aroused desire. The grocer has asked the terms and the salesman has named them. Describe how he may proceed to secure decision.
6. Correct the following:

A salesman is selling kitchen chairs to a furniture store. The salesman says, "Now, Mr. ———, I have explained to you the superior merits of these chairs and you have seen that they are stronger and have a better finish than anything else you have. I hope you have decided to order some."
7. Give an illustration of the principle of mentioning in your conversation a larger amount than you expect the prospect to buy.

PART III—THE SALESMAN'S POST-GRADUATE COURSE

Chapter XX—Friendly Relations with the Buyer

1. Explain the reason why the cultivation of the buyer's friendship is often a necessary step before the sale can be made.
2. What is the first essential in cultivating friendly relations and how can this be revealed and practiced?
3. Name four ways in which the friendship of the buyer may be secured.
4. Give two examples in connection with each.
5. In what kind of selling, generally speaking, does the friendship of the buyer count the most?
6. In how many ways can the salesman help his customers with a view to cultivating their friendship?
7. Suggest means of offering the customer service-plus when selling to him:
 - (a) A complicated piece of machinery
 - (b) A correspondence course
 - (c) A set of expensive tools
 - (d) Advertising space

Chapter XXI—The Retail Satisfaction that Creates Good-Will

1. Why is it more important to win the satisfaction of retail customers than it is to sell them any particular goods?
2. What is the first thing the customer must be made to feel when the clerk comes forward to serve?
3. Why is truthfulness of statement as necessary in retail as in all other forms of selling?
4. In selling the following articles, the wearing qualities of which cannot be guaranteed, because they are made to sell at a low price, how would you describe their deficiencies to a customer: a saw, hosiery, enameled ware, a suite of furniture, a stove.
5. How should complaints about unsatisfactory goods be rectified?
6. In what way does the manner of the salesperson help to make the customer take more interest in the goods?
7. What is the secret of interest?

8. Explain how the habit of concentration can be acquired.
9. Describe briefly half a dozen methods by means of which the sales clerk can indicate a desire to please and to serve.

Chapter XXII—The Knowledge that Gives Breadth

1. What is the necessary information every salesman should have about things that are peculiar to the methods of his house in doing business?
2. What is the effect upon the salesman of knowing that he is thoroughly prepared?
3. Name some of the more important things that a salesman should know about his goods?
4. What should the salesman know about competitive goods?
5. How may a retail salesman obtain information about his goods? Name three ways.
6. What knowledge should the salesman have concerning his house?
7. What knowledge should the salesman have concerning his trade in general?
8. Why is general knowledge of business valuable?
9. Why is a good general education valuable for the salesman?
10. What is the attitude of the buyer when he finds he knows more about the goods than the salesman does?
11. List the kind of information needed by:
 - (a) A specialty salesman selling an office device.
 - (b) A wholesale salesman selling tea.
 - (c) A retail salesman selling carpets.
12. Suggest the sources of the information needed by the three foregoing salesmen.

Chapter XXIII—Selling at Wholesale Illustrated

1. Analyze the selling talk given in this chapter, showing where the mental stages of the sale developed.
2. Show what principles previously outlined have been applied.
3. Discuss fully wherein the salesman could have done better and state your reasons for so thinking.
4. Construct a specimen selling talk in which a coffee salesman approaches a dealer with the offer of a newly advertised brand of coffee selling for 35 cents a pound, which is supported by a distribution of samples among a list of consumers

furnished by dealers. A demand for the coffee is always created after a sampling campaign, because of its superb quality. The dealer objects that he hasn't room for a new line, that a 35-cent coffee is much too expensive for his class of trade, and that his customers drink only 25-cent coffee. He is forced to acknowledge that he has never handled a 35-cent brand. The salesman gives him facts and figures to prove that in proportion to the rest of his turnover and as compared with the turnover of other grocers his coffee sales are not what they should be. The 35-cent coffee gives the dealer a profit of 10 cents a pound.

Chapter XXIV—A Specialty Sale Illustrated

1. Analyze the selling talk given in this chapter, showing where the mental stages of the "sale" developed.
2. Show what principles previously outlined have been applied.
3. Discuss fully wherein the salesman could have done better and state your reasons for so thinking.
4. Prepare a sales talk recounting the sale of life insurance to Hartley after the doctor's examination proves he is a first-class risk.
5. Prepare a sales talk depicting the sale of a correspondence course to a young mechanic who is earning \$5 a day, spends 25 cents on tobacco a day, and is offered an engineering course on easy payment which will not entail an expenditure of more than 10 cents a day spread over three years. The prospect objects that he can't afford it; that he hasn't time to study, although he works only seven hours a day; and that he can't understand the course as he hasn't had much schooling.

The salesman first of all compels him to acknowledge that he has the time and that he can afford the course. He then appeals to his ambition, depicts the more prosperous future of a brain worker as compared with a manual laborer. The salesman finally explains that the correspondence course is so simply written that every word can easily be understood.

Chapter XXV—A Retail Sale Illustrated

1. Analyze the selling talk given in this chapter, showing where the mental stages of the "sale" developed.
2. Show what principles previously outlined have been applied.

3. Discuss fully wherein the salesman could have done better and state your reasons for so thinking.
 4. Construct a retail sales talk depicting the sale of an overcoat to a young man who is vain about his appearance, has red hair, and does not wish to spend more than \$25. The salesman finds a blue overcoat that is particularly becoming and which the prospect likes in every way. But it costs \$30.
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PART IV—THE CULTIVATION OF CHARACTER

Chapter XXVI—The Make-Up of Personality

1. Explain why personality plays such an important part in salesmanship.
2. Mention half a dozen essential traits to which particular attention needs to be given if the salesman is to develop his personality.
3. Suggest a course of study, which when combined with his daily work, will enable the salesman to develop his personality.

Chapter XXVII—The Leaven of Enthusiasm

1. What is the distinguishing feature of the enthusiastic salesman?
2. What is the effect of enthusiasm on others?
3. What other qualities does the anecdote relating to the sale of calendars to the grocer illustrate in addition to enthusiasm?
4. Why does enthusiasm react so favorably on the work habit?
5. List the various ways in which enthusiasm can be revealed and explain how it may be developed.
6. Write a brief essay in your own words on the importance of enthusiasm in salesmanship.

Chapter XXVIII—The Happy Habit of Industry

1. Why does enthusiasm tend to be inefficacious unless supported by the habit of industry?
2. What is the most important resolution for the salesman to make who wishes to cultivate the habit of industry?
3. Write in your own words a brief essay upon the cultivation of the habit of industry.

Chapter XXIX—The Importance of Little Things

1. Name a dozen little things in manner or appearance which might mar the effect of a salesman's personality.
2. Why is it necessary to guard against crudities of speech?
3. How can unconscious mannerisms be detected and then eradicated?
4. Write a brief essay on the importance of little things in the make-up of a salesman's personality.

Chapter XXX—The Courtesy that Attracts and Pleases

1. Distinguish between politeness and courtesy.
2. Describe how both may be revealed.
3. How can politeness be revealed when listening to others?
4. Why is it important for the aggressive salesman to pay particular attention to his manners and bearing?
5. Write a brief essay on the effect of politeness and good manners on others.

Chapter XXXI—The Fire of Courage

1. What are the two aspects of courage and how do they differ?
2. What resolutions would you suggest for developing the habit of persistence?
3. What is courage primarily based on?
4. Why are truth and honesty so necessary for the development of courage.
5. Write a brief essay on the trait of courage and explain its relationship to the salesman's work.

Chapter XXXII—Tact the Lubricant of the Sales Interview

1. Select six anecdotes from this work—three of which reveal tact in a high degree and three of which portray its lack—and explain why.
2. Describe in your own words as many ways as you can think of whereby a salesman might display tact.
3. Write a brief essay on the importance of tact in salesmanship.

INDEX

(References are to pages)

A

- Action, 49
 - motives that influence, 12
- Affection, appeal to, 21
- Analogy,
 - combating illogical arguments, 83
 - comparative statements are strengthened by, 82
 - reasoning by, 81
- Appeal (See "Motives")
- Appearance,
 - attention to, always worth while, 280
 - effect of, upon salesman himself, 282
 - effect upon others, 281
 - important in selling a specialty, 117, 282
- Approach, 27 (See also "Preapproach")
 - flank, 62
 - variations of, 62
 - importance of different methods, 140
 - in retail selling, 122
 - negative questions, 63
- Argument (See "Selling talk")
- Article (See "Goods")
- Attention, 46
 - securing, by mail, 48
 - undivided, importance of, 117

B

- Business card, use of, 121
- Buyers, (See also "Shoppers")
 - attitude of, 32

- classification of, 25, 141
 - cold and critical type, 143
 - easy-going, good-natured type, 142
 - self-important type, 144
- closing with cautious and doubting, 190
- contradicting the, 154
- excuses, how to meet them, 166-175
- friendly relations with, 199-208
- how temperament modifies attitude, 138
- meeting objections, 110, 153-165
- mental indecision of, 155
- particular trade must be considered, 28
- pessimistic, 162
- preapproach, 97-104
- sizing up, 138
- specialty, 29
 - salesman's attitude towards, 31
- things to remember in opening interview, 116-124
- types of, 138-146
- wholesale, 25
 - attitude of, 27
 - problem of, 26
 - salesman's attitude towards, 27

Buying, motives that influence
(See "Motives")

C

- Calendars, example of selling talk, 265

- Calls, following up the first, 136
- Canvass (See "Selling talk")
- Card, business, use of, 121
- Caution, appeal to, 17
- Character, cultivation of, 259-316
 - personality, 259-263
 - appearance and mannerisms, 280-287
 - courage, 296-309
 - courtesy, 288-295
 - enthusiasm, 264-271
 - industry, 272-279
 - tact, 310-316
- Classification of buyers, 141
 - cold and critical type, 143
 - easy-going, good-natured type, 142
 - self-important type, 144
- Closing the sale,
 - appealing to the imagination, 183
 - assume order will be given, 179
 - avoid the negative question close, 180
 - cautious, doubting buyers, 190
 - change of tactics, 184
 - difficulty of landing the order, 176
 - diplomacy of, 176-186
 - failure of first attempt, 184
 - final argument, 185
 - how much to sell, 188
 - merely the final decision, 178
 - obstacles after order is accepted, 193
 - picture the customer using the goods, 182
 - positive assertions help, 181
 - psychological moment, 177
 - rebates and discounts, 192
 - resource in a crisis, 194
 - signing of a contract, 190
 - things to remember, 187-195
 - when to sell the whole line, 189
- Comparison with competing goods,
 - "knocking," 128
 - when permissible, 128
- Competing goods, knowledge of, 227
- Competitors,
 - avoid mentioning, 127
 - clean-cut comparisons, 129
 - "knocking," 128
- Complaints, about unsatisfactory goods, 214
- Concentration, acquiring the habit of, 216
- Confidence, developing, in the buyer, 133
- Contact, point of, topics of the day, 205
- Contract, signing of, 190
- Courage,
 - adequate preparation essential, 300
 - aim at big game, 304
 - cause and control of fear, 300
 - daring, 296
 - discipline facing disagreeable prospects, 304
 - endurance, 296
 - example of initiative, 307
 - importance of first sale, 301
 - in gaining interview, 92-95
 - persistence, 297
 - specialty salesman, 299
 - where made good, 298
 - reaction of industry upon, 279
 - self-discipline of, produces initiative, 306
 - truth of statement, 302
- Courtesy,
 - aggressiveness not liked, 291
 - consideration for other people, 291
 - cultivating habit of, 293

Courtesy—Continued

- discourtesy not to be imitated, 292
- part of salesman's stock in trade, 294
- politeness, 288
 - example of the effect of, 289
 - of the good listener, 290
- Curiosity, arousing interest by appealing to, 60-61
- Customer (See "Buyers")
- Cutlery, illustration of selling talk, 233-240

D

- Decision, 49
- Definition of salesmanship, 7
- Demand, as a selling point, 36
- Demonstration, 130
 - in a retail store, 57
 - letting the customer handle goods, 131
 - method of arousing interest, 55
 - of food, 56
- Desire (See "Motives")
- Discounts, stumbling block in closing, 192
- Displaying the goods, 55
 - carefulness in, 58
 - first impressions important, 58
 - foods, 56
 - illustration of retail rug sale, 250-256
 - illustration of a wholesale sale, 233-240
 - in a retail store, 57

E

- Enthusiasm,
 - breaking down opposition, 265
 - contagious effect of, 264
 - effect upon temperament, 267

- fruit of confidence and belief, 270
 - how to develop, 269
- industry the fly-wheel of, 272
- killed by superficial study of goods, 215
- loyalty, 267
 - example of result of, 268
 - must be revealed in small things, 269
- "pep and ginger," the sparkle of salesmanship, 264
- reaction of industry on, 271, 279
- Estimates, preapproach essential before submitting, 103
- Excel, desire to, 16
- Excuses, (See also "Objections")
 - finding a point of agreement, 173
 - how to meet them, 166-175
 - "I can't afford it," 166
 - examples of meeting, 167
 - "I'll have to think it over," 170
 - "I'm too busy to decide now," 169
 - must be answered from customer's viewpoint, 173
 - "stop in on your next trip," 172
 - "suppose you call again," 171
 - "too busy to talk with you now," 169

F

- Fear, cause and control of, 300
- Follow-up of first visit, 136
- Friendship,
 - examples of "service-plus," 202
 - factor in making sales, 199
 - geniality essential, 200
 - ground of common interest, 204
 - how geniality can be revealed, 201

Friendship—Continued

importance of first impressions,
200

importance of "service-plus,"
201

revealing interest in what others do, 203

salesman as a source of information, 206

topics of the day a part of contact, 205

Function of the salesman, 7

G

Gain, desire for, 15

Geniality,

factor in cultivating friendship,
200

how it can be revealed, 201

Goods,

analysis of, 42

carefulness in displaying, 58

competing, knowledge of, 227

first impressions important, 58

knowledge of,

in retail field, 227

livens sales talk, 231

processes of manufacture,
223

worth of, 229

letting the customer handle,
131

picture the customer using, 182

salesman must know, 230

satisfactory, management responsible for, 212

source of information, 228

special knowledge of, 225

special knowledge of the expert, 226

study of, 221

unsatisfactory, complaints as to, 214

what size order to solicit, 188

Good-will,

complaints about goods, 213

goods must give satisfaction,
212

retail field,

importance of, 209

satisfaction, study of the art of giving, 209

things to be done, 211

truthfulness of statement, 213

H*Honesty,*

confidence created by truthfulness, 213

effect on repeat order, 303

in describing goods, 212

of statement, 212

I

Illustrative methods of arousing interest, 52

Imagination, appealing to, 183

Imitation, appeal to, 19

Impressions, first, importance of,
200

Industry,

developing habits of, 277

effect upon temperament, 272

finding work to do, 275

fly-wheel of enthusiasm, 272

importance of foot work, 278

importance of work habit, 274

lack of self-discipline, 273

reaction of, upon enthusiasm and courage, 279

tackling the hardest jobs first,
278

Information,

salesman as a source of, 206

sources of, 228

Ingredients, as a talking point,
39

Initiative,
 example of, 307
 exercise of, develops faculty of judgment, 309
 produced by self-discipline of courage, 306
 Insurance, example of selling talk, 241-249
 Interest, arousing, 48
 appeal to curiosity, 60
 example, 61
 carefulness in displaying goods, 58
 common ground, 204
 demonstration in a retail store, 57
 demonstration method, 55
 demonstration of food, 56
 enthusiastic method, 53
 first impressions of goods, 58
 illustrative methods, 52
 method of cultivating friendship, 203
 modes and methods, 52-65
 shoppers, 67
 straightforward method, 54
 Interview,
 adroit use of samples, 91
 appearance, 117
 ask for as if expected, 90
 asking for a definite person, 89
 attention, undivided, 117
 avoid mentioning competitors, 127
 broken, patching up, 119
 difficulty of gaining, 85
 diplomacy of the close, 176-186
 handling the customer with a grouch, 119
 importance of first impressions, 116
 importance of managing, 187
 jolting the harmony of, 125

keeping the prospect on the track, 187
 never apologize for taking up time, 120
 polite insistence, 87
 reasons why refused, 86
 tact the lubricant of, 310-315
 things to remember during, 125-137
 things to remember in opening, 116-124
 use of business card, 121
 when to avoid mentioning nature of business, 88
 when to force, 86
 when to shake hands, 121
 winning, 85-96

J

Judgment, exercise of initiative develops faculty of, 309

K

"Knocking," 128
 Knowledge (See also "Training")
 desire for, 18

L

Loyalty,
 an aspect of enthusiasm, 267
 example of the result of, 268
 must be revealed in small things, 269

M

"Madam," correct use of, 122
 Mannerisms,
 control and eradication, 286
 control of the voice, 286
 handicap of unconscious, 283
 speech, crudities of, 284

- Manners, 52
 acquiring courteous, 293
- Mental impressions, vividness of, 77-84
- Mental stages, 45
 action, 49
 attention, 46
 desire, 49
 in a retail sale, 46
 interest, 48
 modes and methods of arousing, 52-65
- Metaphors,
 construction of, 80
 use of, 80
- Motives for buying, 12-24
 appeal to,
 affection, 21
 caution, 17
 imitation, 19
 profit, 35
 desire, 49
 for gain, 15
 for knowledge, 18
 to excel, 16
 love of praise, 22
 pleasure of possession, 22
 salesman's appeal to, 13
 which instincts to appeal to, 23

N

- Negative questions, 63, 180
 "Nerve" (See "Courage")

O

- Objections, (See also "Excuses")
 answered from the customer's viewpoint, 173
 as to price, 158
 as to quality, 157
 disgruntled customer, 164
 finding a point of agreement, 173

- honest, 155
 answering, 156
 meeting, a necessary study, 110, 153
 meeting pessimistic mood, 162
 mental indecision of the buyer, 155
 "no room for a new line," 160
 on the score of taste, 162
 pointing out erroneous statement, 163
 salesman's attitude in contradicting, 154
 "satisfied with our present connections," 159
 trivial, 156
 answering, 156
 "we are stocked up to the limit," 159

Order,

- assume that it will be given, 179
 difficulty of landing, 176
 effect of untruth on repeat, 303
 how much to sell, 188
 psychological moment to close, 177
 signing of a contract, 190
 when to sell the whole line, 189

P

- Palatability, as a talking point, 40
 Payment, easy terms of, 168
 Persistence, 297
 quiet, where made good, 298
 specialty salesman, 299
 Personality,
 appearance and mannerisms, 280-287
 courage, 296-309
 courtesy, 288-295
 definition of, 260
 development of, 316
 effect of, 259

Personality—*Continued*
 enthusiasm, 264-271
 how developed, 261
 how to make study practical,
 262
 industry, 272-279
 study of, comes last, 261
 tact, 310-316

"Points of contact" (See "Talk-
 ing points")

Politeness (See "Courtesy")

Possession, pleasure of, 22

Praise, love of, 22

Preapproach,
 definite facts about prospect, 97
 essential before estimating, 103
 illustrations of the value of, 100
 metaphorical definition of, 99
 of the specialty salesman, 98
 quantity of goods used, 102
 retail sales, 100
 customer's name, 101
 where neglect of proved fatal,
 102

Price,
 as a talking point, 37
 in retail sales,
 avoid mention of, 73
 finding shopper's limit, 74
 meeting objections as to, 158

Problems and questions covering
 subject matter of book, 319-
 336

Products (See "Goods")

Profit, appeal to, 35

Prospects (See "Buyers")

Purchasing (See "Buying")

Q

Qualifications, for success in
 salesmanship, 3-7

Quality, meeting objections as
 to, 157

Questions,
 asking, in retail sales, 72
 covering subject matter of
 book, 319-336
 importance of asking, 132
 negative, 63, 180

R

Rebates,
 stumbling block in closing, 192
 Reputation, as a talking point, 38
 Retail sales, (See also "Shop-
 pers")
 asking too many questions, 72
 attitude must be positive, 66
 avoid telling size, 76
 characteristic types of shop-
 pers, 147
 clerical work of salespersons,
 216
 correct use of "Sir" and "Mad-
 am," 122
 customers should be treated
 alike, 217
 demonstration, 57
 enthusiasm about the goods,
 215
 finding shopper's price limit, 74
 friendly relations with custom-
 ers, 207
 habit of concentration, 216
 helping the customer, 218
 how to handle more than one
 customer, 124
 illustration of selling talk, 250-
 256
 importance of good-will, 209
 interesting retail customer, 66-
 76
 knowledge of goods, 227
 mental satges, 46
 mentioning prices, 73
 patience with the customers,
 219

Retail sales—*Continued*

- preapproach, 100
 - customer's name, 101
- problems of salesperson, 66
- salesman must know his stock, 230
- salesperson and service, 211
- satisfaction,
 - study of the art of giving, 209
 - things not to be done, 210
- shoppers who are "just looking around," 71, 123
- showing the largest sized packages, 75
- study of the goods, 221
- substitutions, 68-70
- Rugs, illustration of a selling talk, 250-256

S

- Sales talk (See "Selling talk")
- Samples, adroit use of, to gain interview, 91
- Satisfaction (See "Service")
- Schools of salesmanship, for specialty selling, 224
- Selling arguments (See "Selling talk")
- Selling points (See "Selling talk")
- Selling talk, (See also "Talking points")
 - analogy,
 - combating illogical arguments, 83
 - comparative statement is strengthened by, 82
 - analysis of goods, 42
 - appeal to profit, 35
 - arguments must be adapted to temperament, 139

- arguments must be clear and definite, 77
- connecting with prospect's interest, 59
- construction of, 34
- definiteness of statement, 78
- details must be logically arranged, 78
- diplomacy of the close, 176-186
- disadvantages of inflexible, 108
- how to build up a strong claim step by step, 111
- how to make it convincing, 109
- illustration of an insurance sale, 241-249
- illustrations of wholesale sale, 233-240
- language and style of, 109
- make argument applicable to prospect's needs, 126
- method of learning arguments, 42
- must be flexible, 107
- preparation of, 33-44
- reasoning by analogy, 81
- securing customer's assent to claims, 110
- similes and metaphors,
 - construction of, 80
 - use of, 80
- the time for silence, 113
- varying, to suit different temperaments, 140
- vividness of mental impressions, 77-84
- Service,
 - acquiring the habit of concentration, 216
 - as a talking point, 38
 - clerical work of salesperson, 216
 - equal treatment of customers, 217
 - helping the customer, 218

Service—Continued

- patience with the customer, 219
- retail field,
 - complaints about unsatisfactory goods, 213
 - giving satisfaction, 209
 - goods must give satisfaction, 212
 - responsibility of management, 212
 - responsibility of sales force, 212
 - salesperson, 211
 - truthfulness, 213
 - superficial study of goods kills enthusiasm, 215
- "Service-plus,"
 - examples of, 202
 - importance of, 201
- Shaking hands, 121
- Shoppers,
 - correct use of "Sir" and "Madam," 122
 - irresolute, garrulous type, 149
 - "just looking around," 71
 - methods of interesting, 67
 - nervous, irritable, querulous type, 147
 - handling of, 148
 - study of the art of giving satisfaction, 209
 - when study of types is useful, 147
- Signing of a contract, 190
- Silence, the time for, 113
- Similes,
 - construction of, 80
 - use of, 80
- "Sir," correct use of, 122
- Specialty,
 - buyers, 29
 - salesman's attitude towards, 31

- importance of appearance when selling, 282
- insurance sale illustrated, 241-249
- persistence, 299
- schools of salesmanship, 224
- talking points of, 40
- value of preapproach, 98
- Speech,
 - crudities of, 284
 - mannerisms in, 285
- Statement, definiteness of, 78
- Stock (See "Goods")
- Study of salesmanship, 8-11
- Substitutions, 68-70

T

- Tact,
 - argumentative salesmen, 312
 - definition, 310
 - essential in breaking down prejudice, 312
 - in its negative aspect, 315
 - recognizes the hopeless prospect, 314
 - revealed in little things, 311
 - senses hopeless antagonism, 314
- Talking points, (See also "Selling talk")
 - analysis of, 33
 - demand, 36
 - ingredients as, 39
 - palatability as, 40
 - price, 37
 - reputation, 38
 - service, 38
 - specialty, 40
 - terms, 37
- Talk, selling (See "Selling talk")
- Taste, objections on the score of, 162

- Temperament,
 argument must be adapted to, 139
 effect of enthusiasm upon, 267
 effect of industry upon, 272
 how it modifies customer's attitude, 138
- Terms,
 as a talking point, 37, 168
 rebates and discounts,
 stumbling block in closing, 192
- Testimonials, use of, 134
- Training, salesman's,
 all-around, 3-11
 example of value of, 229
 expertness needed in selling
 certain goods, 226
 growing importance of, 221
 knowledge of,
 competing goods, 227
 goods, livens sales talk, 231
 house and its history, 222
 processes of manufacture, 223
 necessity for knowledge, 222
 requirements by motor truck concern, 223
 schools of salesmanship for specialty selling, 224
 sources of information regarding goods, 228
 special knowledge of goods, 225
 use of eyes and ears in acquiring knowledge, 231
- V
- Voice, control of, 286

